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EDMUND BURKE'S

SPEECH ON CONCILIATION

WITH AMERICA

1775

Edited with Introduction and Notes for the use of Academies and High Schools

BY

JOSEPH RUSHTON, L. H. D.

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EDMUND BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE was born in Dublin, Ireland, Jan. 1, 1730. He was one of a family of fifteen children. His father, Richard Burke, was an attorney of some note. At the age of fifteen Edmund entered Trinity College, Dublin, and remained there five years, when he graduated, and took his degree of B. A. Oliver Goldsmith, the poet, was contemporary with him in the university. In 1750 Burke went to London, and became a law student of the Middle Temple. In a short time he discovered that literature rather than law was his calling. He therefore devoted himself to literary labors. Politics and political economy had many attractions for him, and in writing for the various periodicals of that time on these subjects he laid the foundation of his future power as a parliamentarian. He published two works of some distinction in 1765–66. Their titles, "A Vindication of Natural Society" and the "Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful," attracted attention, and the perusal of the works won for their author the regard of Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and other eminent scholars. This led to his election as a member of the famous literary club composed of men like Reynolds, Garrick, Goldsmith, Gibbons, Johnson, and Boswell. In 1757 he wrote "An Account of the European Settlements in America" (2 volumes). In the preparation of this work he acquired that familiarity with the history and conditions of the British Colonies that gave him the facts on which to base his appeal for concession.

Other literary labors and productions issued from his pen previous to his election to Parliament and later in his life which have contributed much to a knowledge of the conditions of his time.

In 1761 Burke became private secretary to William Gerard Hamilton, popularly known as Single-Speech Hamilton. Hamilton was Secretary to Lord Halifax, the lord-lieutenant of Ireland. He secured a pension of £300 for Burke, but discovering that Hamilton purposed to use his gift as a means of power over him, Burke refused to accept it. He resigned his position at the end of the year.

The administration of Lord Grenville fell in 1765, and was succeeded by that of the Marquis of Rockingham. This peer gave the position of private secretary to Burke, and he was elected a member of Parliament by the borough of Wendover, Buckinghamshire. His remarks on the address to the throne, made on the very day he took his seat, attracted the attention of Pitt, afterward Earl of Chatham. Burke took an active part in the discussion of American affairs in Parliament. The debates were often very stormy, but because of his accurate knowledge of the details of colonial life and administration, he sustained his positions though he could not always convince his opponents. His speech on American Taxation delivered April 19, 1774, is remarkable for its thorough and careful examination into American affairs. When he rose, in the following year, to deliver his speech on conciliation with America, his friends feared that it would be simply a repetition of the one on taxation. To their great astonishment it contained as much valuable information, almost all of which was new; and its argument, equally strong with that of the former effort, was yet based on new facts. The

effect of the speech on conciliation was not that which the reader would naturally suppose. King and Parliament were bent on coercion, and Burke's resolutions were lost by large majorities.

Burke's championship of the colonies nearly lost him his seat in the House. He was compelled to defend his action by writing "Two Letters to the Gentlemen of Bristol."

The condition of Ireland occupied much of his time and energy at this period, and he tried faithfully to introduce reforms, but with slight results.

In 1783, under the ministry of the Duke of Portland, Burke took up the study of the affairs of East India. His reports on the conditions of that misgoverned country aroused a deep interest in England. This resulted eventually in the impeachment of Warren Hastings for maladministration of the government of India. Burke conducted the trial for the people, and his great speech at the opening of the case is a masterpiece of eloquence. This speech occupied four days, and was accepted as one of the grandest efforts of the kind ever delivered. His closing speech, however, in which he reviewed the whole case, occupied nine days. Yet, strange to say, Hastings was acquitted.

Shortly after this Burke resigned his position in Parliament, and retired to his estate in Beaconsfield, where he spent his time in writing. His publications were many. One of them, entitled "Reflections on the Revolution in France," at once became popular; 30,000 copies were sold. Burke was opposed to the Revolution. This brought him many enemies and the loss of the friendship of the great parliamentarian Fox, who nevertheless paid a warm tribute to the character and genius of Burke. A pension of £1,200

from the civil list, and another of £2,500 from the four and a half per cent. fund, were given him by the government. He died July 9, 1797, and was accorded the distinguished honor of burial in Westminster Abbey.

As an orator, Burke held a foremost position. Sir Robert Peel, Earl Russell, and other eminent parliamentarians give him the rank of genius, and compare him favorably with Demosthenes and Cicero. His style is in many respects modeled after the famous Roman orator. Macaulay considers Burke the superior of every other orator in aptitude of comprehension and richness of imagination. Other writers hold him up as a leader for all who desire to cultivate the art of oratory. There are fewer faults in his style than in that of other famous speakers, and this is owing to the fact that Burke was famous as a conversationalist, voluminous as a writer, and most careful in thechoice of words, phrases, and sentences in both speaking and writing. He made the best use of the adage: "Reading makes a full man, speaking makes a ready man, and writing makes a correct man."

PREFACE.

"THE most faultless of Mr. Burke's productions." Such is the opinion of Sir James Mackintosh on this speech. A larger number of passages have been admired and quoted for their beauty and wealth of imagery than in any other of Burke's productions. The speech was prepared with great care. The amount of detail in the history and management of the colonies brought out in the course of the address exhibits a mass of learning and research that is remarkable. The peculiar conditions and situation of the various colonies seem to have been perfectly familiar to Burke. As a political economist, he shows in his arguments a thorough insight into the effects of legislation on taxation, while as a master of debate he ingeniously, yet with absolute truthfulness, lays bare the false premises and conclusions of his opponents. The student of rhetoric and oratory can find few speeches equal to this, and none superior.

Burke exhibits in this speech a wide range of reading and a thorough readiness in the use of quotations. His mind was saturated with a knowledge of the Bible, which afforded him many expressions besides those referred to in the notes. His reading made him a full man, and therefore ready in his speech, while he avoided the pitfall of the shallow student. He was not pedantic. Notice how naturally the line of argument adds reason on reason with grace and ease. There are no abrupt breaks; no sudden bounds from one thought to another. But the silken thread of harmony unites the whole into a beautiful word picture.

SYNOPSIS [1]

PARAGRAPH.

1. Opportunity for Conciliation afforded by return of the grand Penal Bill, ... 1
2. Need of fixed ideas of policy, ... 2, 3
3. Frequent changes of policy and their disastrous results, . 4
4. Reasons for the speech,
   a. General discontent at Parliament's attitude, . . 5
   b. Necessity demands action, even though timidity suggests caution, ... 6, 7
   c. Because he is a private member his plan will be considered purely on its merits, ... 8
5. The plan is *peace*. To be obtained,—
   a. By removing grounds of difference, ... 9
   b. And restoring confidence, ... 9
   c. By simple methods rather than splendid pretenses, . 10
6. Conciliation admissible.
   a. Lord North's plan suggests it, ... 11
   b. Previous to any submission by America — former plans have failed, ... 12
   c. The principle is correct, for the superior power may offer peace with honor, ... 14

Conciliation implies concession,

A. Should concession be made? 14
B. What should this consist of? 14
A. Should concession be made? This must be decided from the nature of the case, ... 14

1. The nature of the object,
   a. The population, ... 15, 16
   b. The commerce of the Colonies, . . . 17–29
   (A glowing description of progress, . . . 25
   c. The agriculture of the Colonies, ... 29
   d. The fisheries and their growth, . . . 30
2. Retention by force is wrong, ... 31
   a. It is a temporary expedient, ... 32
   b. It is uncertain in its results, ... 33
   c. It impairs the object, ... 34
   d. Experience is against its use, ... 35
3. The temper and character of the Americans demand liberty and freedom, ... 36, 37
   a. As descendants of Englishmen, they inherit this spirit, 38
   b. Their form of government confirms them in this spirit, 39
   c. Their religion has grown out of and fostered this spirit, 40
   d. The contrast between the colonists and their slaves promotes this spirit, ... 41
   e. Education, ... 42
   f. Remoteness from England, ... 43

[1] Copyright.

4. The unsettled condition of the colonies. Hence the need of conciliation and concession, ... 44–46
Three ways suggested, ... 47
a. To change the spirit of the people, ... 48
But this can not be done, even by oppression, as in —
(1.) Stopping grants of land, ... 49–51
(2.) Impoverishing by restraint, ... 52
(3.) Restraining their liberty, ... 53, 54
(4.) Freeing their slaves, ... 55,56
b. To prosecute them as criminals, ... 58
But this would be folly.
(1.) Because great public contests can not be called criminal, 59
(2.) It would lead to internal warfare, and thus disrupt the Empire, ... 60
(3.) England must be the judge, and therefore must hesitate before passing sentence, ... 61
(4.) Where this has been tried, it has failed, . . 62, 63
c. To comply with the American demands, and make concessions, 64
B. The Nature of the Concession. They complain of taxation without representation, ... 65
1. England's policy should be to concede her rights if this would produce peace in the colonies, ... 66, 67
2. Admit them into an interest in the Constitution, . . 68
3. Taxation for revenue must be publicly renounced, 69
It has been proved useless, ... 70
4. The trade laws narrow the market for the Americans, 71–74
Objections valueless, ... 75–77
5. The genius of the English Constitution is in accordance with this conciliatory spirit, as illustrated by four examples of similar cases, ... 78
a. Ireland, ... 79
b. Wales, ... 80-83
c. Chester, ... 84–87
d. Durham, ... 87, 88
6. Representation in Parliament not necessary, . . 89, 90
7. But grant to the colonial assemblies the power to levy taxes for the support of government and for aid in time of war, 91
This leads to six fundamental propositions and three corollaries, 92
Resolved,—
1. That the colonies have not had representation in Parliament, 93
2. That consequently they have been taxed to the prejudice of their peace and prosperity, ... 94
a. This is acknowledged by the words of acts of Parliament, 95
b. The repeal of the Stamp Act and other oppressive acts admits the truth of the proposition, ... 96
3. That owing to distance no method of representation has been devised, ... 97
4. That the colonial assemblies have power to impose taxes, 98

Evidence of this is furnished by the granting of "Aids to His Majesty," 99
5. That the granting of aids by the colonies has been stamped as a colonial right by Parliament, . . . 100
a. In the Indian wars, ... 100
b. Reimbursement by Parliament, April 4, 1748, . 101
c. Message of the King, Jan. 28, 1756, 102
Adopted by Parliament, Feb. 3, 1756, . 103, 104
(1.) Conclusive evidence, ... 105
(2.) These aids were in the nature of a grant, not an imposition, ... 106
6. That experience has shown that this method is agreeable to the Colonies, ... 107, 108
The three corrodaries,
1. To repeal certain acts and amend another,
a. The Boston Port Bill should be repealed, for other ports deserved as much censure, . . . 110
b. The Massachusetts charter should be restored, . 111
c. The act requiring persons accused of murder to be tried in England should be repealed, . . . 112
d. Modification of the Treason Act, ... 113
2. To give the Colonies a fair and unbiased judicature, . 114
3. To reform the Courts of Admiralty, . . 115–116
Objections to Burke's Plan.
1. If the principle of no taxation without representation is admitted, the Colonies will apply it to all legislation, . 118
a. But the words are taken from acts of Parliament which admit the principle, ... 119
b. The Colonies have shown no disposition to demand more than all Englishmen demand and obtain under the Constitution, ... 120
c. The interest of the Americans is in the general good of the empire, ... 121
2. To give this power to the Colonies would dissolve the Empire. But such has not been the result in other cases. See pars. 79, 80, 122.
Burke's plan better than Lord North's, . . . 123
1. Ransom by auction is a dangerous experiment, . . 124
2. It would be fatal to the Constitution, . . . 125
3. It would not give satisfaction to the Colonies, . . 126
4. It would lead to great and inextricable difficulties, . 127
5. All the Colonies would not agree to the plan. Then would follow disturbance, discord, and rebellion, . . 128–131
The results of Burke's plan.
1. A larger revenue with contentment and peace, . 133–136
2. It would bind the Colonies to the Mother more firmly than ever, ... 137, 138
3. It would add to the dignity of the Empire, . . 139
4. Therefore, resolved, ... 140

SPEECH

ON

Moving His Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies, March 22, 1775.

1 I hope, Sir,[1] that, notwithstanding the austerity of the Chair, your good nature will incline you to some degree of indulgence toward human frailty. You will not think it unnatural that those who have an object depending, which strongly engages their hopes and fears, should be somewhat inclined to superstition. As I came into the House full of anxiety about the event of my motion,[2] I found, to my infinite surprise, that the grand penal bill,[3] by which we had passed sentence on the trade and sustenance of America, is to be returned[4] to us from the other House. I do confess, I could not help looking on this event as a fortunate omen. I look upon it as a sort of providential favor; by which we are put once more in possession of our deliberative capacity, upon a business so very questionable in its nature, so very uncertain in its issue. By the return of this bill, which seemed to have taken its flight forever, we are at this very instant nearly as free to choose a plan for our American government as we were on the first day

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[1] *Sir.* The Speaker of the House of Commons.

[2] *My motion.* See close of speech.

[3] *Grand penal bill.* Lord North's bill, proposed Feb. 10, 1775. This was an act interdicting the trade and fisheries of all the New England colonies. Its effect would have been ruinous to thousands of fishermen. See paragraph [30].

[4] *Is to be returned.* The House of Lords returned it with an amendment covering all the American colonies.

of the session. If, Sir, we incline to the side of conciliation, we are not at all embarrassed (unless we please to make ourselves so) by any incongruous mixture of coercion and restraint. We are therefore called upon, as it were, by a superior warning voice, again to attend to America, to attend to the whole of it together, and to review the subject with an unusual degree of care and calmness.

2 Surely it is an awful subject; or there is none so on this side of the grave. When I first had the honor of a seat in this House, the affairs of that continent pressed themselves upon us, as the most important and most delicate object of parliamentary attention. My little share in this great deliberation oppressed me. I found myself a partaker in a very high trust; and having no sort of reason to rely on the strength of my natural abilities for the proper execution of that trust, I was obliged to take more than common pains to instruct myself in everything which relates to our colonies. I was not less under the necessity of forming some fixed ideas concerning the general policy of the British empire. Something of this sort seemed to be indispensable; in order, amid so vast a fluctuation of passions and opinions, to concenter my thoughts, to ballast my conduct, to preserve me from being blown about [1] by every wind of fashionable doctrine. I really did not think it safe, or manly, to have fresh principles to seek upon every fresh mail which should arrive from America.

3 At that period [2] I had the fortune to find myself

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[1] *Blown about.* Opinions as to the best method of colonial government constantly varied. The Stamp Act was passed one year and repealed the next (1766).

[2] *At that period.* 1766, when he was sent to parliament as member for Wendover.

in perfect concurrence with a large majority in this House. Bowing under that high authority, and penetrated with the sharpness and strength of that early impression, I have continued ever since, without the least deviation, in my original sentiments. Whether this be owing to an obstinate perseverance in error, or to a religious adherence to what appears to me truth and reason, it is in your equity to judge.

4 Sir, parliament, having an enlarged view of objects, made, during this interval, more frequent changes in their sentiments and their conduct than could be justified in a particular person upon the contracted scale of private information. But though I do not hazard anything approaching to censure on the motives of former parliaments to all those alterations, one fact is undoubted, — that under them the state of America has been kept in continual agitation. Everything administered as remedy to the public complaint, if it did not produce, was at least followed by a heightening of the distemper, until, by a variety of experiments, that important country has been brought into her present situation ;[1] — a situation which I will not miscall, which I dare not name, which I scarcely know how to comprehend in the terms of any description.

5 In this posture, Sir, things stood at the beginning of the session. About that time, a worthy member[2] of great parliamentary experience, who, in the year 1766, filled the chair of the American committee with much ability, took me aside, and, lamenting the present aspect of our politics, told me things were come to such a pass that our former methods of pro-

[1] *Present situation.* Preparations for war were being hastily pushed forward. Within a month the battle of Lexington was fought.

[2] *Worthy member.* Mr. Rose Fuller.

ceeding in the House would be no longer tolerated. That the public tribunal (never too indulgent to a long and unsuccessful opposition) would now scrutinize our conduct with unusual severity. That the very vicissitudes and shiftings of ministerial measures, instead of convicting their authors of inconstancy and want of system, would be taken as an occasion of charging us with a predetermined discontent, which nothing could satisfy; while we accused every measure of vigor as cruel, and every proposal of lenity as weak and irresolute. The public, he said, would not have patience to see us play the game out with our adversaries: we must produce our hand. It would be expected that those who for many years had been active in such affairs should show that they had formed some clear and decided idea of the principles of colony government, and were capable of drawing out something like a platform of the ground which might be laid for future and permanent tranquillity.

6 I felt the truth of what my honorable friend represented; but I felt my situation, too. His application might have been made with far greater propriety to many other gentlemen. No man was indeed ever better disposed, or worse qualified, for such an undertaking than myself. Though I gave so far in to his opinion that I immediately threw my thoughts into a sort of parliamentary form, I was by no means equally ready to produce them. It generally argues some degree of natural impotence of mind, or some want of knowledge of the world, to hazard plans of government except from a seat of authority. Propositions are made, not only ineffectually, but somewhat disreputably, when the minds of men are not properly disposed for their reception; and for my part, I am not ambitious of ridicule; not absolutely a candidate for disgrace.

7 Besides, Sir, to speak the plain truth, I have in general no very exalted opinion of the virtue of paper government, nor of any politics in which the plan is to be wholly separated from the execution. But when I saw that anger and violence prevailed every day more and more, and that things were hastening toward an incurable alienation of our colonies, I confess my caution gave way. I felt this, as one of those few moments in which decorum yields to a higher duty. Public calamity is a mighty leveler; and there are occasions when any, even the slightest, chance of doing good must be laid hold on, even by the most inconsiderable person.

8 To restore order and repose to an empire so great and so distracted as ours, is, merely in the attempt, an undertaking that would ennoble the flights of the highest genius, and obtain pardon for the efforts of the meanest understanding. Struggling a good while with these thoughts, by degrees I felt myself more firm. I derived, at length, some confidence from what in other circumstances usually produces timidity. I grew less anxious, even from the idea of my own insignificance. For, judging of what you are by what you ought to be, I persuaded myself that you would not reject a reasonable proposition because it had nothing but its reason to recommend it. On the other hand, being totally destitute of all shadow of influence, natural or adventitious, I was very sure that, if my proposition were futile or dangerous, if it were weakly conceived, or improperly timed, there was nothing exterior to it, of power to awe, dazzle, or delude you. You will see it just as it is; and you will treat it just as it deserves.

9 The proposition is peace. Not peace through the medium of war; not peace to be hunted through

the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations; not peace to arise out of universal discord, fomented from principle, in all parts of the empire; not peace to depend on the juridical determination of perplexing questions, or the precise marking the shadowy boundaries[1] of a complex government. It is simple peace, sought in its natural course, and in its ordinary haunts. It is peace sought in the spirit of peace; and laid in principles purely pacific. I propose, by removing the ground of the difference, and by restoring the *former unsuspecting confidence of the colonies in the mother country*,[2] to give permanent satisfaction to your people; and (far from a scheme of ruling by discord) to reconcile them to each other in the same act, and by the bond of the very same interest which reconciles them to British government.

10 My idea is nothing more. Refined policy ever has been the parent of confusion, and ever will be so, as long as the world endures. Plain, good intention, which is as easily discovered at the first view as fraud is surely detected at last, is, let me say, of no mean force in the government of mankind. Genuine simplicity of heart is a healing and cementing principle. My plan, therefore, being formed upon the most simple grounds imaginable, may disappoint some people, when they hear it. It has nothing to recommend it to the pruriency of curious ears. There is nothing at all new and captivating in it. It has nothing of the splendor of the project,[3] which has been

[1] *Shadowy boundaries.* Limits of power in imposing taxes. The Tories claimed for parliament the legal right as the legislative body. The radical Whigs held the contrary. Burke and the Whigs of his type waived the legal right on the ground of expediency.

[2] *Former — mother country.* Used by Congress at Philadelphia in 1774 to show state of feeling after repeal of the Stamp Act.

[3] *The project.* Feb. 20, 1775, Lord North brought in resolutions,

lately laid upon your table by the noble lord[1] in the blue ribbon. It does not propose to fill your lobby with squabbling colony agents,[2] who will require the interposition of your mace, at every instant, to keep the peace among them. It does not institute a magnificent auction of finance, where captivated provinces come to general ransom by bidding against each other, until you knock down the hammer, and determine a proportion of payments beyond all the powers of algebra to equalize and settle.

11 The plan which I shall presume to suggest, derives, however, one great advantage from the proposition and registry of that noble lord's project. The idea of conciliation is admissible. First, the House, in accepting the resolution moved by the noble lord, has admitted, notwithstanding the menacing front of

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entitled "Propositions for Conciliating the Differences with America," which were agreed to by the House February 27, as follows: "That when the governor, council, or assembly, or general court of any of His Majesty's provinces or colonies in America shall propose to make provision, according to the condition, circumstances, and situation of such province or colony, for contributing their proportion to the common defense (such proportion to be raised under the authority of the general court or general assembly of such province or colony, and disposable by parliament), and shall engage to make provision also for the support of the civil government and the administration of justice in such province or colony, it will be proper, if such proposal shall be approved by His Majesty and the two Houses of parliament, and for so long as such provision shall be made accordingly, to forbear, in respect of such province or colony, to levy any duty, tax, or assessment, or to impose any further duty, tax, or assessment, except such duties as it may be expedient to continue to levy or impose, for regulation of commerce; the net produce of the duties last mentioned to be carried to the account of such province or colony respectively."

[1] *Noble lord.* Lord North, a Knight of the Garter. The blue ribbon was the badge of the order.

[2] *Colony agents.* Men engaged to attend parliament, and look after the interests of the colonies. Benjamin Franklin had occupied this post for Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Georgia. Burke had stood for New York.

our address, [1] notwithstanding our heavy bills of pain and penalties, that we do not think ourselves precluded from all ideas of free grace and bounty.

12 The House has gone further; it has declared conciliation admissible, *previous* to any submission on the part of America. It has even shot a good deal beyond that mark, and has admitted that the complaints of our former mode of exerting the right of taxation were not wholly unfounded. That right thus exerted is allowed to have had something reprehensible in it, something unwise, or something grievous; since, in the midst of our heat and resentment, we, of ourselves, have proposed a capital alteration; and, in order to get rid of what seemed so very exceptionable, have instituted a mode that is altogether new; one that is, indeed, wholly alien from all the ancient methods and forms of parliament.

13 The *principle* of this proceeding is large enough for my purpose. The means proposed by the noble lord for carrying his ideas into execution, I think, indeed, are very indifferently suited to the end; and this I shall endeavor to show you before I sit down. But, for the present, I take my ground on the admitted principle. I mean to give peace. Peace implies reconciliation; and, where there has been a material dispute, reconciliation does in a manner always imply concession on the one part or on the other. In this state of things I make no difficulty in affirming that the proposal ought to originate from us. Great and acknowledged force is not impaired, either in effect or in opinion, by an unwillingness to exert itself. The superior power may offer peace with honor and

[1] *Address.* This was an answer to papers sent to the House by the King, which related to disturbances in America. The House pledged its absolute support to His Majesty in suppressing rebellion.

with safety. Such an offer from such a power will be attributed to magnanimity. But the concessions of the weak are the concessions of fear. When such a one is disarmed, he is wholly at the mercy of his superior; and he loses forever that time and those chances, which, as they happen to all men, are the strength and resources of all inferior power.

14 The capital leading questions on which you must this day decide, are these two: First, whether you ought to concede; and secondly, what your concession ought to be. On the first of these questions we have gained (as I have just taken the liberty of observing to you) some ground. But I am sensible that a good deal more is still to be done. Indeed, Sir, to enable us to determine both on the one and the other of these great questions with a firm and precise judgment, I think it may be necessary to consider distinctly the true nature and the peculiar circumstances of the object which we have before us. Because after all our struggle, whether we will or not, we must govern America according to that nature, and to those circumstances; and not according to our own imaginations, nor according to abstract ideas of right; by no means according to mere general theories of government, the resort to which appears to me, in our present situation, no better than arrant trifling. I shall therefore endeavor, with your leave, to lay before you some of the most material of these circumstances in as full and as clear a manner as I am able to state them.

15 The first thing that we have to consider with regard to the nature of the object is the number of people in the colonies. I have taken for some years a good deal of pains on that point. I can by no calculation justify myself in placing the number below two millions of inhabitants of our own European blood

and color, besides at least 500,000 others, who form no inconsiderable part of the strength and opulence of the whole. This, Sir, is, I believe, about the true number. There is no occasion to exaggerate, where plain truth is of so much weight and importance. But whether I put the present numbers too high or too low, is a matter of little moment. Such is the strength with which population shoots in that part of the world that, state the numbers as high as we will, while the dispute continues, the exaggeration ends. While we are discussing any given magnitude, they are grown to it. While we spend our time in deliberating on the mode of governing two millions, we shall find we have millions more to manage. Your children do not grow faster from infancy to manhood than they spread from families to communities, and from villages to nations.

16 I put this consideration of the present and the growing numbers in the front of our deliberation, because, Sir, this consideration will make it evident to a blunter discernment than yours, that no partial, narrow, contracted, pinched, occasional system will be at all suitable to such an object. It will show you, that it is not to be considered as one of those *minima* which are out of the eye and consideration of the law; not a paltry excrescence of the state; not a mean dependent, who may be neglected with little damage and provoked with little danger. It will prove that some degree of care and caution is required in the handling such an object; it will show that you ought not, in reason, to trifle with so large a mass of the interests and feelings of the human race. You could at no time do so without guilt; and be assured you will not be able to do it long with impunity.

17 But the population of this country, the great

and growing population, though a very important consideration, will lose much of its weight, if not combined with other circumstances. The commerce of your colonies is out of all proportion beyond the numbers of the people. This ground of their commerce indeed has been trodden some days ago, and with great ability, by a distinguished person[1] at your bar.[2] This gentleman, after thirty-five years,— it is so long since he first appeared at the same place to plead for the commerce of Great Britain,— has come again before you to plead the same cause, without any other effect of time than that to the fire of imagination and extent of erudition, which even then marked him as one of the first literary characters of his age, he has added a consummate knowledge in the commercial interest of his country, formed by a long course of enlightened and discriminating experience.

18 Sir, I should be inexcusable in coming after such a person with any detail, if a great part of the members who now fill the House had not the misfortune to be absent when he appeared at your bar. Besides, Sir, I propose to take the matter at periods of time somewhat different from his. There is, if I mistake not, a point of view, from whence, if you will look at this subject, it is impossible that it should not make an impression upon you.

19 I have in my hand two accounts; one a comparative state of the export trade of England to its colonies, as it stood in the year 1704, and as it stood in the year 1772. The other a state of the export trade of this country to its colonies alone, as it stood

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[1] *Person.* Mr. Glover, a poet, who also won distinction by his accurate commercial knowledge.

[2] *At your bar.* Across the entrance to the floor of the House was a bar, past which none but members and officers could go.

in 1772, compared with the whole trade of England to all parts of the world (the colonies included) in the year 1704. They are from good vouchers; the latter period from the accounts on your table, the earlier from an original manuscript of Davenant,[1] who first established the inspector-general's office, which has been ever since his time so abundant a source of parliamentary information.

20 The export trade to the colonies consists of three great branches. The African,[2] which, terminating almost wholly in the colonies, must be put to the account of their commerce; the West Indian; and the North American. All these are so interwoven that the attempt to separate them would tear to pieces the contexture of the whole; and if not entirely destroy, would very much depreciate the value of all the parts. I therefore consider these three denominations to be, what in effect they are, one trade.

21 The trade to the colonies, taken on the export side, at the beginning of this century, that is, in the year 1704, stood thus: —

Exports to North America and the West Indies	£483,265
To Africa, ...	86,665
	£569,930

22 In the year 1772, which I take as a middle year between the highest and lowest of those lately laid on your table, the account was as follows: —

To North America and the West Indies, .	£4,791,734
To Africa, ...	866,398
To which, if you add the export trade from Scotland, which had in 1704 no existence, .	364,000
	£6,022,132

[1] *Davenant.* Inspector general of exports and imports in 1705.
[2] *The African.* The slave trade.

23 From five hundred and odd thousand, it has grown to six millions. It has increased no less than twelvefold. This is the state of the colony trade, as compared with itself at these two periods, within this century; — and this is matter for meditation. But this is not all. Examine my second account. See how the export trade to the colonies alone in 1772 stood in the other point of view, that is, as compared to the whole trade of England in 1704.

The whole export trade of England, including that to the colonies, in 1704, ...	£6,509,000
Export to the colonies alone, in 1772, . .	6,024,000
Difference, ...	£ 485,000

24 The trade with America alone is now within less than £500,000 of being equal to what this great commercial nation, England, carried on at the beginning of this century with the whole world! If I had taken the largest year of those on your table, it would rather have exceeded. But, it will be said, is not this American trade an unnatural protuberance, that has drawn the juices from the rest of the body? — The reverse. It is the very food that has nourished every other part into its present magnitude. Our general trade has been greatly augmented, and augmented more or less in almost every part to which it ever extended; but with this material difference, that of the six millions which in the beginning of the century constituted the whole mass of our export commerce, the colony trade was but one-twelfth part; it is now (as a part of sixteen millions) considerably more than a third of the whole. This is the relative proportion of the importance of the colonies at these two periods; and all reasoning concerning our mode of treating

them must have this proportion as its basis, or it is a reasoning weak, rotten, and sophistical.

25 Mr. Speaker, I can not prevail on myself to hurry over this great consideration. It is good for us to be here. We stand where we have an immense view of what is, and what is past. Clouds, indeed, and darkness, rest upon the future. Let us, however, before we descend from this noble eminence, reflect that this growth of our national prosperity has happened within the short period of the life of man. It has happened within sixty-eight years. There are those alive whose memory might touch the two extremities. For instance, my Lord Bathurst[1] might remember all the stages of the progress. He was, in 1704, of an age at least to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough *acta parentum jam legere, et quæ sit poterit cognoscere virtus.*[2] Suppose, Sir, that the angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues, which made him one of the most amiable, as he is one of the most fortunate, men of his age, had opened to him in vision, that when, in the fourth generation,[3] the third prince of the House of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation, which (by the happy issue of moderate and healing councils) was to be made Great Britain,[4] he should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity

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[1] *Lord Bathurst.* The Barons Bathurst were prominent in the peerage of Great Britain. This one, born in 1681, was an eminent statesman and a patron of literature. Pope addressed to him his *Epistle on the Use of Riches.* He took his seat in 1705, and died in 1775.

[2] *Acta — virtus.* "To study the deeds of his forefathers, and to know the value of manliness." — *Vergil's Eclogues, IV, 26, 27.*

[3] *Fourth generation.* George III was the grandson of George II.

[4] *Made Great Britain.* By the act of Union 1707, England and Scotland became one nation under this title.

to its fountain, and raise him to a higher rank[1] of peerage, while he enriched the family with a new one.[2] If amid these bright and happy scenes of domestic honor and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country, and while he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle, rather than a formed body, and should tell him, "Young man, there is America, which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men, and uncouth manners; yet shall, before you taste of death[3] show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing conquests and civilizing settlements in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!" If this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it! Fortunate indeed, if he lives to see nothing that shall vary the prospect, and cloud the setting of his day!

26 Excuse me, Sir, if turning from such thoughts I resume this comparative view once more. You have

[1] *Higher rank.* Lord Bathurst was made an earl in 1772.

[2] *New one.* Bathurst's son became Lord Chancellor under the title of Baron Apsley in 1771.

[3] *Taste of death.* "Cowards die many times before their deaths. The valiant never taste of death but once." — *Julius Cæsar, II. Scene ii.*

seen it on a large scale; look at it on a small one. I will point out to your attention a particular instance of it in the single province of Pennsylvania. In the year 1704, that province called for £11,459 in value of your commodities, native and foreign. This was the whole. What did it demand in 1772? Why, nearly fifty times as much; for in that year the export to Pennsylvania was £507,909, nearly equal to the export to all the colonies together in the first period.

27 I choose, Sir, to enter into these minute and particular details because generalities, which in all other cases are apt to heighten and raise the subject, have here a tendency to sink it. When we speak of the commerce with our colonies, fiction lags after truth, invention is unfruitful, and imagination cold and barren.

28 So far, Sir, as to the importance of the object in view of its commerce, as concerned in the exports from England. If I were to detail the imports, I could show how many enjoyments they procure, which deceive the burden of life; how many materials which invigorate the springs of national industry, and extend and animate every part of our foreign and domestic commerce. This would be a curious subject indeed — but I must prescribe bounds to myself in a matter so vast and various.

29 I pass therefore to the colonies in another point of view, their agriculture. This they have prosecuted with such a spirit that, besides feeding plentifully their own growing multitude, their annual export of grain, comprehending rice, has some years ago exceeded a million in value. Of their last harvest, I am persuaded they will export much more. At the beginning of the century some of these colonies imported corn[1] from the mother country. For some time

[1] *Corn.* Grain.

past, the Old World has been fed from the New. The scarcity which you have felt would have been a desolating famine, if this child of your old age, with a true filial piety, with a Roman charity,[1] had not put the full breast of its youthful exuberance to the mouth of its exhausted parent.

30 As to the wealth which the colonies have drawn from the sea by their fisheries, you had all that matter fully opened at your bar. You surely thought these acquisitions of value, for they seemed even to excite your envy ; and yet the spirit by which that enterprising employment has been exercised, ought rather, in my opinion, to have raised your esteem and admiration. And pray, Sir, what in the world is equal to it ? Pass by the other parts, and look at the manner in which the people of New England have of late carried on the whale fishery. While we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson's Bay and Davis's Straits, while we are looking for them beneath the arctic circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen serpent[2] of the south. Falkland Island,[3] which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of natural ambition, is but a stage and resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat

[1] *Roman Charity.* A Roman mother, condemned to death by strangling, was saved by the jailer, who changed her fate to death by starvation. Her daughter, a young mother, saved her life by feeding her at her own breasts. The magistrates, struck with admiration at this filial devotion, pardoned the mother, and provided for the support of both. Other writers relate the incident as that of a father nursed by his daughter.

[2] *Frozen serpent.* A constellation in the Antarctic regions.

[3] *Falkland Island.* Look up its interesting history.

more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know that while some of them draw the line and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude, and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this most perilous mode of hard industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people ; a people who are still, as it were, but in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood. When I contemplate these things ; when I know that the colonies in general owe little or nothing to any care of ours, and that they are not squeezed into this happy form by the constraints of watchful and suspicious government, but that, through a wise and salutary neglect, a generous nature has been suffered to take her own way to perfection ; when I reflect upon these effects; when I see how profitable they have been to us,— I feel all the pride of power sink, and all presumption in the wisdom of human contrivances melt and die away within me. My rigor relents. I pardon something to the spirit of liberty.

31 I am sensible, Sir, that all which I have asserted in my detail, is admitted in the gross ; but that quite a different conclusion is drawn from it. America, gentlemen say, is a noble object. It is an object well worth fighting for. Certainly it is, if fighting a people be the best ways of gaining them. Gentlemen in this respect will be led to their choice of means by their complexions[1] and their habits. Those who understand the military art, will of course have some

[1] *Complexions.* Temperament.

predilection for it. Those who wield the thunder[1] of the state may have more confidence in the efficacy of arms. But I confess, possibly for want of this knowledge, my opinion is much more in favor of prudent management than of force; considering force not as an odious, but a feeble instrument, for preserving a people so numerous, so active, so growing, so spirited, as this, in a profitable and subordinate connection with us.

32 First, Sir, permit me to observe that the use of force alone is but *temporary*. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered.

33 My next objection is its *uncertainty*. Terror is not always the effect of force; and an armament is not a victory. If you do not succeed, you are without resource; for, conciliation failing, force remains; but, force failing, no further hope of reconciliation is left. Power and authority are sometimes bought by kindness; but they can never be begged as alms by an impoverished and defeated violence.

34 A further objection to force is that you *impair the object* by your very endeavors to preserve it. The thing you fought for is not the thing which you recover but depreciated, sunk, wasted, and consumed in the contest. Nothing less will content me than *whole America*. I do not choose to consume its strength along with our own; because in all parts it is the British strength that I consume. I do not choose to be caught by a foreign enemy[2] at the end

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[1] *Wield the thunder.* An allusion to Jupiter, one of whose titles was *Tonans* the *Thunderer*.

[2] *Foreign enemy.* France did take advantage of the Revolutionary war to harass England.

of this exhausting conflict ; and still less in the midst of it. I may escape ; but I can make no insurance against such an event. Let me add that I do not choose wholly to break the American spirit ; because it is the spirit that has made the country.

35 Lastly, we have no sort of *experience* in favor of force as an instrument in the rule of our colonies. Their growth and their utility has been owing to methods altogether different. Our ancient indulgence has been said to be pursued to a fault. It may be so. But we know if feeling is evidence, that our fault was more tolerable than our attempt to mend it ; and our sin far more salutary than our penitence.[1]

36 These, Sir, are my reasons for not entertaining that high opinion of untried force, by which many gentlemen, for whose sentiments in other particulars I have great respect, seem to be so greatly captivated. But there is still behind a third consideration concerning this object, which serves to determine my opinion on the sort of policy which ought to be pursued in the management of America, even more than its population and its commerce. I mean its *temper and character.*

37 In this character of the Americans, a love of freedom is the predominating feature which marks and distinguishes the whole ; and as an ardent is always a jealous affection, your colonies become suspicious, restive, and untractable, whenever they see the least attempt to wrest from them by force, or shuffle from them by chicane, what they think the only advantage worth living for. This fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies probably than in any other people of the earth; and this from

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[1] *Penitence.* For the recent policy of coercion.

a great variety of powerful causes; which, to understand the true temper of their minds, and the direction which this spirit takes, it will not be amiss to lay open somewhat more largely.

38 First, the people of the colonies are descendants of Englishmen. England, Sir, is a nation, which still I hope respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you when this part of your character[1] was most predominant; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas, and on English principles. Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found. Liberty inheres in some sensible object; and every nation formed to itself some favorite point, which, by way of eminence, becomes the criterion of their happiness. It happened, you know, Sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths[2] turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates, or on the balance among the several orders of the state. The question of money was not with them so immediate. But in England it was otherwise. On this point of taxes the ablest pens, and most eloquent tongues have been exercised; the greatest spirits have acted and suffered. In order to give the fullest satisfaction concerning the importance of this point, it was not only necessary for those who in argument defended the excellence of the English constitution, to insist on this privilege of granting money

[1] *Character.* From the reign of Queen Elizabeth to the Commonwealth.

[2] *Ancient Commonwealths.* The states of Greece and Rome.

as a dry point of fact, and to prove that the right had been acknowledged in ancient parchments and blind usages, to reside in a certain body called a House of Commons. They went much farther; they attempted to prove, and they succeeded, that in theory it ought to be so, from the particular nature of a House of Commons, as an immediate representative of the people, whether the old records had delivered this oracle or not. They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people must in effect themselves, mediately or immediately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist. The colonies draw from you, as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, is fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe, or might be endangered, in twenty other particulars without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse; and as they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound. I do not say whether they were right or wrong in applying your general arguments to their own case. It is not easy indeed to make a monopoly of theorems and corollaries. The fact is that they did thus apply those general arguments; and your mode of governing them, whether through lenity or indolence, through wisdom or mistake, confirmed them in the imagination that they, as well as you, had an interest in these common principles.

39 They were further confirmed in this pleasing error by the form of their provincial legislative assemblies. Their governments are popular in a high degree; some are merely popular; in all the popular

representative is the most weighty;[1] and this share of the people in their ordinary government never fails to inspire them with lofty sentiments, and with a strong aversion from whatever tends to deprive them of their chief importance.

40 If anything were wanting to this necessary operation of the form of government, religion would have given it a complete effect. Religion, always a principle of energy, in this new people is no way worn out or impaired; and their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this free spirit. The people are Protestants, and of that kind[2] which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. This is a persuasion not only favorable to liberty, but built upon it. I do not think, Sir, that the reason of this averseness in the dissenting churches, from all that looks like absolute government, is so much to be sought in their religious tenets as in their history. Every one knows that the Roman Catholic religion is at least coeval with most of the governments where it prevails; that it has generally gone hand in hand with them, and received great favor and every kind of support from authority. The Church of England, too, was formed from her cradle[3] under the nursing care of regular government. But the dissenting interests have sprung up in direct opposition to all the ordinary powers of the world; and could justify that opposition only on a strong claim to natural liberty. Their very existence depended on the powerful and unremitted

[1] *Most weighty.* "In some of the colonies all the officers were chosen directly by the people. In others, the governor and some of the magistrates were appointed by the crown, but were unable to act without the co-operation of Assemblies elected by the Colonists."

[2] *That kind.* Dissenters from the Church of England.

[3] *Her cradle.* The Church of England dates back to early British times.

assertion of that claim. All Protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent, and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. This religion, under a variety of denominations agreeing in nothing but in the communion of the spirit of liberty, is predominant in most of the northern provinces, where the Church of England, notwithstanding its legal rights, is in reality no more than a sort of private sect, not composing most probably the tenth of the people. The colonists left England when this spirit was high, and in the emigrants was the highest of all; and even that stream of foreigners, which has been constantly flowing into these colonies, has, for the greatest part, been composed of dissenters from the establishments[1] of their several countries, and have brought with them a temper and character far from alien to that of the people with whom they mixed.

41 Sir, I can perceive by their manner that some gentlemen object to the latitude of this description; because in the southern colonies the Church of England forms a large body, and has a regular establishment. It is certainly true. There is, however, a circumstance attending these colonies, which, in my opinion, fully counterbalances this difference, and makes the spirit of liberty still more high and haughty than in those to the northward. It is that in Virginia and the Carolinas they have a vast multitude of slaves. Where this is the case in any part of the world, those who are free, are by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege.

[1] *Establishments.* State churches.

Not seeing there that freedom, as in countries where it is a common blessing, and as broad and general as the air,[1] may be united with much abject toil, with great misery, with all the exterior of servitude, liberty looks, among them, like something that is more noble and liberal. I do not mean, Sir, to commend the superior morality of this sentiment, which has at least as much pride as virtue in it; but I can not alter the nature of man. The fact is so; and these people of the southern colonies are much more strongly, and with a higher and more stubborn spirit, attached to liberty, than those to the northward. Such were all the ancient commonwealths; such were our Gothic[2] ancestors; such in our days were the Poles;[3] and such will be all masters of slaves, who are not slaves themselves. In such a people, the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible.

42 Permit me, Sir, to add another circumstance in our colonies, which contributes no mean part toward the growth and effect of this untractable spirit. I mean their education. In no country perhaps in the world is the law so general a study. The profession itself is numerous and powerful; and in most provinces it takes the lead. The greater number of the deputies sent to the congress were lawyers. But all who read, and most do read, endeavor to obtain some smattering in that science. I have been told by an eminent bookseller that in no branch of his business, after tracts of popular devotion, were so many books

[1] *As broad — air.* "As broad and general as the casing air." — *Macbeth, Act III, Scene iv.*

[2] *Gothic.* Low Dutch.

[3] *Poles.* "When this speech was delivered, Poland had recently been struck from the list of nations, the first partition of her territory having been made by Austria, Prussia, and Russia in 1772."

as those on the law exported to the plantations. The colonists have now fallen into the way of printing them for their own use. I hear that they have sold nearly as many of Blackstone's Commentaries in America as in England. General Gage marks out this disposition very particularly in a letter on your table. He states that all the people in his government are lawyers, or smatterers in law; and that in Boston they have been enabled, by successful chicane,[1] wholly to evade many parts of one of your capital penal constitutions. The smartness of debate will say that this knowledge ought to teach them more clearly the rights of legislature, their obligations to obedience, and the penalties of rebellion. All this is mighty well. But my honorable and learned friend[2] on the floor, who condescends to mark what I say for animadversion, will disdain that ground. He has heard, as well as I, that when great honors and great emoluments do not win over this knowledge to the service of the State, it is a formidable adversary to government. If the spirit be not tamed and broken by these happy methods, it is stubborn and litigious. *Abeunt studia in mores.*[3] (This study renders men acute, inquisitive, dexterous, prompt in attack, ready in defense, full of resources.) In other countries, the people, more simple, and of a less mercurial cast, judge of an ill principle in government only by actual grievance; here they anticipate the evil, and judge of the pressure of the grievance by the badness of the principle. They augur misgovernment at a distance;

[1] *Successful chicane.* Under the new Regulation acts town meetings could not be *called.* But this statute was evaded by adjourning from day to day.

[2] *Friend.* Thurlow, the attorney-general. The lowest tier of benches was occupied by members of the government.

[3] *Mores.* "Studies pass into habits." *Ovid, Heroides, XV, 83.*

and snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.

43 The last cause of this disobedient spirit in the colonies is hardly less powerful than the rest, as it is not merely moral, but laid deep in the natural constitution of things. Three thousand miles of ocean lie between you and them. No contrivance can prevent the effect of this distance in weakening government. Seas roll and months pass between the order and the execution; and the want of a speedy explanation of a single point is enough to defeat a whole system. You have, indeed, winged ministers[1] of vengeance, who carry your bolts in their pounces to the remotest verge of the sea. But there a power steps in that limits the arrogance of raging passions and furious elements, and says, "So far shalt thou go, and no farther."[2] Who are you, that should fret and rage, and bite the chains of nature? Nothing worse happens to you than does to all nations who have extensive empire; and it happens in all the forms into which empire can be thrown. In large bodies, the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk can not govern Egypt and Arabia and Kurdistan as he governs Thrace; nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers which he has at Brusa and Smyrna. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. The Sultan gets such obedience as he can. He governs with a loose rein, that he may govern at all; and the whole of the force and vigor of his authority in his center is derived from a prudent relaxation in all his borders. Spain, in her provinces, is, perhaps,

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[1] *Winged ministers.* Ships of war, "Ministrum fulminis alitern." — *Horace, Odes, IV, i.*

[2] *So far — no farther. Job xxxviii, 11.*

not so well obeyed as you are in yours. She complies, too; she submits; she watches times. This is the immutable condition, the eternal law of extensive and detached empire.

44 Then, Sir, from these six capital sources,—of descent, of form of government, of religion in the northern provinces, of manners in the southern, of education, of the remoteness of situation from the first mover of government,— from all these causes a fierce spirit of liberty has grown up. It has grown with the growth of the people in your colonies, and increased with the increase of their wealth; a spirit, that unhappily meeting with an exercise of power in England, which, however lawful, is not reconcilable to any ideas of liberty, much less with theirs, has kindled this flame that is ready to consume us.

45 I do not mean to commend either the spirit in this excess, or the moral causes which produce it. Perhaps a more smooth and accommodating spirit of freedom in them would be more acceptable to us. Perhaps ideas of liberty might be desired, more reconcilable with an arbitrary and boundless authority. Perhaps we might wish the colonists to be persuaded that their liberty is more secure when held in trust for them by us (as their guardians during a perpetual minority) than with any part of it in their own hands. The question is, not whether their spirit deserves praise or blame, but — what, in the name of God, shall we do with it? You have before you the object, such as it is, with all its glories, with all its imperfections on its head.[1] You see the magnitude, the importance, the temper, the habits, the disorders. By all these considerations we are strongly urged to deter-

[1] *Head.* "With all my imperfections on my head." — *Hamlet Act I, Scene v.*

mine something concerning it. We are called upon to fix some rule and line for our future conduct which may give a little stability to our politics, and prevent the return of such unhappy deliberations as the present. Every such return will bring the matter before us in a still more untractable form. For, what astonishing and incredible things have we not seen already! What monsters have not been generated from this unnatural contention! While every principle of authority and resistance has been pushed, upon both sides, as far as it would go, there is nothing so solid and certain, either in reasoning or in practise, that has not been shaken. Until very lately, all authority in America seemed to be nothing but an emanation from yours. Even the popular part of the colony constitution derived all its activity, and its first vital movement, from the pleasure of the crown. We thought, Sir, that the utmost which the discontented colonists could do, was to disturb authority; we never dreamed they could of themselves supply it, knowing in general what an operose business it is to establish a government absolutely new. But having, for our purposes in this contention, resolved that none but an obedient assembly should sit, the humors of the people there, finding all passage through the legal channel stopped, with great violence broke out another way. Some provinces have tried their experiment, as we have tried ours; and theirs has succeeded. They have formed a government sufficient for its purposes, without the bustle of a revolution, or the troublesome formality of an election. Evident necessity and tacit consent have done the business in an instant. So well they have done it that Lord Dunmore[1] (the account is among the fragments on your

[1] *Lord Dunmore.* Governor of Virginia.

table) tells you, that the new institution is infinitely better obeyed than the ancient government ever was in its most fortunate periods. Obedience is what makes government, and not the names by which it is called; not the name of governor, as formerly, nor committee, as at present. This new government has originated directly from the people; and was not transmitted through any of the ordinary artificial media of a positive constitution. It was not a manufacture ready formed, and transmitted to them in that conditionfrom England. The evil arising from hence is this: that the colonists having once found the possibility of enjoying the advantages of order in the midst of a struggle for liberty, such struggles will not henceforward seem so terrible to the settled and sober part of mankind as they had appeared before the trial.

46 Pursuing the same plan of punishing by the denial of the exercise of government to still greater lengths, we wholly abrogated the ancient government of Massachusetts.[1] We were confident that the first feeling, if not the very prospect of anarchy, would instantly enforce a complete submission. The experiment was tried. A new, strange, unexpected face of things appeared. Anarchy is found tolerable. A vast province has now subsisted, and subsisted in a considerable degree of health and vigor, for near a twelvemonth, without governor, without public council, without judges, without executive magistrates. How long it will continue in this state, or what may arise out of this unheard-of situation, how can the wisest of us conjecture? Our late experience has taught us that many of those fundamental principles, formerly believed infallible, are either not of the importance they were imagined to be; or that we have not at all ad-

[1] *Massachusetts.* By Reconstruction Bill in 1774.

verted to some other far more important and far more powerful principles, which entirely overrule those we had considered as omnipotent. I am much against any further experiments, which tend to put to the proof any more of these allowed opinions, which contribute so much to the public tranquillity. In effect, we suffer as much at home by this loosening of all ties, and this concussion of all established opinions, as we do abroad. For, in order to prove that the Americans have no right to their liberties, we are every day endeavoring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own. To prove that the Americans ought not to be free, we are obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself; and we never seem to gain a paltry advantage over them in debate, without attacking some of those principles, or deriding some of those feelings, for which our ancestors have shed their blood.

47 But, Sir, in wishing to put an end to pernicious experiments, I do not mean to preclude the fullest inquiry. Far from it. Far from deciding on a sudden or partial view, I would patiently go round and round the subject, and survey it minutely in every possible aspect. Sir, if I were capable of engaging you to an equal attention, I would state that, as far as I am capable of discerning, there are but three ways of proceeding relative to this stubborn spirit which prevails in your colonies, and disturbs your government. These are: To change that spirit, as inconvenient, by removing the causes; to prosecute it as criminal; or, to comply with it as necessary. I would not be guilty of an imperfect enumeration; I can think of but these three. Another has, indeed, been started, that of giving up the colonies;[1] but it

[1] *Colonies.* Proposed by Dr. Tucker Dean of Gloucester in 1774.

met so slight a reception that I do not think myself obliged to dwell a great while upon it. It is nothing but a little sally of anger, like the frowardness of peevish children, who, when they can not get all they would have, are resolved to take nothing.

48 The first of these plans, to change the spirit as inconvenient, by removing the causes, I think is the most like a systematic proceeding. It is radical in its principle; but it is attended with great difficulties, some of them little short, as I conceive, of impossibilities. This will appear by examining into the plans which have been proposed.

49 As the growing population in the colonies is evidently one cause of their resistance, it was last session mentioned in both Houses, by men of weight, and received not without applause, that in order to check this evil, it would be proper for the crown to make no further grants of land. But to this scheme there are two objections. The first, that there is already so much unsettled land in private hands, as to afford room for an immense future population, although the crown not only withheld its grants, but annihilated its soil. If this be the case, then the only effect of this avarice of desolation, this hoarding of a royal wilderness, would be to raise the value of the possessions in the hands of the great private monopolists, without any adequate check to the growing and alarming mischief of population.

50 But if you stopped your grants, what would be the consequence? The people would occupy without grants. They have already so occupied in many places. You can not station garrisons in every part of these deserts. If you drive the people from one place, they will carry on their annual tillage, and remove with their flocks and herds to another. Many

of the people in the back settlements are already little attached to particular situations. Already they have topped the Appalachian Mountains. From thence they behold before them an immense plain, one vast, rich, level meadow; a square of five hundred miles. Over this they would wander without a possibility of restraint; they would change their manners with the habits of their life; would soon forget a government by which they were disowned; would become hordes of English Tartars;[1] and pouring down upon your unfortified frontiers a fierce and irresistible cavalry, become masters of your governors and your counselors, your collectors, and comptrollers, and of all the slaves that adhered to them. Such would, and, in no long time, must be, the effect of attempting to forbid as a crime, and to suppress as an evil, the command and blessing of Providence, "Increase and multiply." Such would be the happy result of an endeavor to keep as a lair of wild beasts that earth, which God, by an express charter, has given to the children of men. Far different, and surely much wiser, has been our policy hitherto. Hitherto we have invited our people, by every kind of bounty, to fixed establishments. We have invited the husbandman to look to authority for his title. We have taught him piously to believe in the mysterious virtue of wax and parchment. We have thrown each tract of land, as it was peopled, into districts; that the ruling power should never be wholly out of sight. We have settled all we could; and we have carefully attended every settlement with government.

51 Adhering, Sir, as I do, to this policy, as well as

[1] *English Tartars.* Hordes of Tartars and Mongols under Genghis Khan (1100–1227) and Timour (1336–1405) swept over Asia, conquering as they went.

for the reasons I have just given, I think this new project of hedging in population to be neither prudent nor practicable.

52 To impoverish the colonies in general, and in particular to arrest the noble course of their marine enterprises, would be a more easy task. I freely confess it. We have shown a disposition to a system of this kind; a disposition even to continue the restraint after the offense; looking on ourselves as rivals to our colonies, and persuaded that of course we must gain all that they shall lose. Much mischief we may certainly do. The power inadequate to all other things is often more than sufficient for this. I do not look on the direct and immediate power of the colonies to resist our violence as very formidable. In this, however, I may be mistaken. But when I consider that we have colonies for no purpose but to be serviceable to us, it seems to my poor understanding a little preposterous, to make them unserviceable, in order to keep them obedient. It is, in truth, nothing more than the old and, as I thought, exploded problem of tyranny, which proposes to beggar its subjects into submission. But remember, when you have completed your system of impoverishment, that nature still proceeds in her ordinary course; that discontent will increase with misery; and that there are critical moments in the fortune of all states, when they who are too weak to contribute to your prosperity, may be strong enough to complete your ruin. *Spoliatis*[1] *arma supersunt.*

53 The temper and character which prevail in our colonies are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We can not, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not

[1] *Spoliatis.* Arms remain to the plundered.— *Juvenal, Satires, VIII, 124.*

sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition; your speech would betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.

54 I think it is nearly as little in our power to change their republican religion, as their free descent; or to substitute the Roman Catholic, as a penalty; or the Church of England, as an improvement. The mode of inquisition and dragooning[1] is going out of fashion in the Old World; and I should not confide much to their efficacy in the New. The education of the Americans is also on the same unalterable bottom with their religion. You can not persuade them to burn their books[2] of curious science; to banish their lawyers from their courts of laws; or to quench the lights of their assemblies, by refusing to choose those persons who are best read in their privileges. It would be no less impracticable to think of wholly annihilating the popular assemblies, in which these lawyers sit. The army, by which we must govern in their place, would be far more chargeable to us; not quite so effectual; and perhaps, in the end, full as difficult to be kept in obedience.

55 With regard to the high aristocratic spirit of Virginia and the southern colonies, it has been proposed, I know, to reduce it, by declaring a general enfranchisement of their slaves. This project has had its advocates[3] and panegyrists; yet I never could

[1] *Dragooning.* Dragoons were quartered upon the Huguenots in France, under Louis XIV, to compel a change of faith.

[2] *Burn their books. Acts xix, 19.*

[3] *Has had its advocates.* Governor Dunmore of Virginia threatened it in 1775. The Romans after Canne armed 8,000 slaves, and bade them earn their freedom

argue myself into any opinion of it. Slaves are often much attached to their masters. A general wild offer of liberty would not always be accepted. History furnishes few instances of it. It is sometimes as hard to persuade slaves to be free as it is to compel freemen to be slaves; and in this auspicious scheme, we should have both these pleasing tasks on our hands at once. But when we talk of enfranchisement, do we not perceive that the American master may enfranchise, too, and arm servile hands in defense of freedom?—a measure to which other people have had recourse more than once, and not without success, in a desperate situation of their affairs.

56 Slaves, as these unfortunate black people are, and dull as all men are from slavery, must they not a little suspect the offer of freedom from that very nation, which has sold them to their present masters? from that nation, one of whose causes of quarrel with those masters is their refusal to deal any more in that inhuman traffic? An offer of freedom from England would come rather oddly, shipped to them in an African vessel, which is refused an entry into the ports of Virginia or Carolina, with a cargo of three hundred Angola[1] negroes. It would be curious to see the Guinea captain[2] attempting at the same instant to publish his proclamation of liberty, and to advertise his sale of slaves.

57 But let us suppose all these moral difficulties got over. The ocean remains. You can not pump this dry; and as long as it continues in its present bed, so long all the causes which weaken authority by distance will continue.

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[1] *Angola.* On the East coast of Africa.
[2] *Guinea captain.* One engaged in the slave-trade.

Ye gods, annihilate but space and time,
And make two lovers happy![1]

— was a pious and passionate prayer, — but just as reasonable, as many of the serious wishes of very grave and solemn politicians.

58 If then, Sir, it seems almost desperate to think of any alterative course for changing the moral causes (and not quite easy to remove the natural) which produce prejudices irreconcilable to the late exercise of our authority, but that the spirit infallibly will continue, and continuing, will produce such effects as now embarrass us, the second mode under consideration is to prosecute that spirit in its overt acts as *criminal.*

59 At this proposition I must pause a moment. The thing seems a great deal too big for my ideas of jurisprudence. It should seem to my way of conceiving such matters that there is a very wide difference in reason and policy between the mode of proceeding on their regular conduct of scattered individuals, or even of bands of men, who disturb order within the state, and the civil dissensions which may, from time to time, on great questions, agitate the several communities which compose a great empire. It looks to me to be narrow and pedantic to apply the ordinary ideas of criminal justice to this great public contest. I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people. I can not insult and ridicule the feelings of millions of my fellow creatures, as Sir Edward Coke[2] insulted one excellent individual (Sir Walter Raleigh) at the bar.

[1] *Ye Gods — happy.* From *The Art of Sinking in Poetry, Chap. xi.*

[2] *Coke.* Referring to the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh when Coke, then attorney-general, insulted him unjustly. One of his denunciations was, "Thou art a monster. Thou hast an English face, but a Spanish heart."

I hope I am not ripe to pass sentence on the gravest public bodies, entrusted with magistracies of great authority and dignity, and charged with the safety of their fellow citizens, upon the very same title that I am. I really think that for wise men this is not judicious; for sober men, not decent; for minds tinctured with humanity, not mild and merciful.

60 Perhaps, Sir, I am mistaken in my idea of an empire, as distinguished from a single state or kingdom. But my idea of it is this: that an empire is the aggregate of many states under one common head; whether this head be a monarch or a presiding republic. It does, in such constitutions, frequently happen (and nothing but the dismal, cold, dead uniformity of servitude can prevent its happening) that the subordinate parts have many local privileges and immunities. Between these privileges and the supreme common authority the line may be extremely nice. Of course disputes, often, too, very bitter disputes, and much ill blood will arise, but though every privilege is an exemption (in the case) from the ordinary exercise of the supreme authority, it is no denial of it. The claim of a privilege seems rather, *ex vi termini*,[1] to imply a superior power. For to talk of the privileges of a state, or of a person, who has no superior, is hardly any better than speaking nonsense. Now, in such unfortunate quarrels among the component parts of a great political union of communities, I can scarcely conceive anything more completely imprudent than for the head of the empire to insist that, if any privilege is pleaded against his will, or his acts, his whole authority is denied, instantly to proclaim rebellion, to beat to arms, and to put the offending provinces under the ban. Will not this, Sir, very

[1] *Ex vi termini.* "From the force of the term."

soon teach the provinces to make no distinctions on their part? Will it not teach them that the government, against which a claim of liberty is tantamount to high treason, is a government to which submission is equivalent to slavery? It may not always be quite convenient to impress dependent communities with such an idea.

61 We are indeed, in all disputes with the colonies, by the necessity of things, the judge. It is true, Sir. But I confess that the character of judge in my own cause is a thing that frightens me. Instead of filling me with pride, I am exceedingly humbled by it. I can not proceed with a stern, assured, judicial confidence, until I find myself in something more like a judicial character. I must have these hesitations as long as I am compelled to recollect that, in my little reading upon such contests as these, the sense of mankind has, at least, as often decided against the superior as the subordinate power. Sir, let me add, too, that the opinion of my having some abstract right in my favor, would not put me much at my ease in passing sentence; unless I could be sure that there were no rights which, in their exercise under certain circumstances, were not the most odious of all wrongs and the most vexation of all injustice. Sir, these considerations have great weight with me, when I find things so circumstanced that I see the same party at once a civil litigant against me in point of right and a culprit before me, while I sit as a criminal judge on acts of his, whose moral quality is to be decided upon the merits of that very litigation. Men are every now and then put, by the complexity of human affairs, into strange situations; but justice is the same, let the judge be in what situation he will.

62 There is, Sir, also a circumstance which convinces

me that this mode of criminal proceeding is not (at least in the present stage of our contest) altogether expedient ; which is nothing less than the conduct of those very persons who have seemed to adopt that mode, by lately declaring a rebellion in Massachusetts Bay, as they had formerly addressed to have traitors brought hither, under an act of Henry the Eighth, for trial. For though rebellion is declared, it is not proceeded against as such ; nor have any steps been taken toward the apprehension or conviction of any individual offender, either on our late or our former address; but modes of public coercion have been adopted, and such as have much more resemblance to a sort of qualified hostility toward an independent power than the punishment of rebellious subjects. All this seems rather inconsistent ; but it shows how difficult it is to apply these juridical ideas to our present case.

63 In this situation, let us seriously and coolly ponder. What is it we have got by all our menaces, which have been many and ferocious ? What advantage have we derived from the penal laws we have passed, and which, for the time, have been severe and numerous ? What advances have we made toward our object, by the sending of a force, which, by land and sea, is no contemptible strength ? Has the disorder abated ? — Nothing less. When I see things in this situation, after such confident hopes, bold promises, and active exertions, I can not, for my life, avoid a suspicion that the plan itself is not correctly right.

64 If then the removal of the causes of this spirit of American liberty be, for the greater part, or rather entirely, impracticable ; if the ideas of criminal process be inapplicable, or if applicable, are in the highest

degree inexpedient, what way yet remains? No way is open, but the third and last — to comply with the American spirit as necessary; or, if you please, to submit to it as a necessary evil.

65 If we adopt this mode, if we mean to conciliate and concede, let us see of what nature the concession ought to be: to ascertain the nature of our concession, we must look at their complaint. The colonies complain that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom. They complain that they are taxed in a parliament in which they are not represented. If you mean to satisfy them at all, you must satisfy them with regard to this complaint. If you mean to please any people, you must give them the boon which they ask, not what you may think better for them, but of a kind totally different. Such an act may be a wise regulation, but it is no concession; whereas our present theme is the mode of giving satisfaction.

66 Sir, I think you must perceive that I am resolved this day to have nothing at all to do with the question of the right of taxation. Some gentlemen startle — but it is true; I put it totally out of the question. It is less than nothing in my consideration. I do not indeed wonder, nor will you, Sir, that gentlemen of profound learning are fond of displaying it on this profound subject. But my consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question. I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government, and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature. Or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation,

and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power. These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other, where reason is perplexed, and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides; and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is the —

> great Serbonian bog,[1]
> Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
> Where armies whole have sunk.

I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company. The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not, what a lawyer tells me I *may* do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one? Is no concession proper but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant? Or does it lessen the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious claim, because you have your evidence-room full of titles, and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them? What signify all those titles and all those arms? Of what avail are they when the reason of the thing tells me that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit, and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons?

67 Such is steadfastly my opinion of the absolute necessity of keeping up the concord of this empire by a unity of spirit, though in a diversity of operations, that, if I were sure the colonists had, at their leaving this country, sealed a regular compact of servitude;

[1] *Great Serbonian bog.* — *Milton's Paradise Lost, II, 592–594.*

that they had solemnly abjured all the rights of citizens; that they had made a vow to renounce all ideas of liberty for them and their posterity to all generations; yet I should hold myself obliged to conform to the temper I found universally prevalent in my own day, and to govern two millions of men, impatient of servitude, on the principles of freedom. I am not determining a point of law, I am restoring tranquillity; and the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of government is fitted for them. That point nothing else can or ought to determine.

68 My idea, therefore, without considering whether we yield as matter of right, or grant as matter of favor, is *to admit the people of our colonies into an interest in the constitution;* and, by recording that admission in the journals of parliament, to give them as strong an assurance as the nature of the thing will admit, that we mean forever to adhere to that solemn declaration of systematic indulgence.

69 Some years ago, the repeal of a revenue act,[1] upon its understood principle, might have served to show that we intended an unconditional abatement of the exercise of a taxing power. Such a measure was then sufficient to remove all suspicion, and to give perfect content. But unfortunate events, since that time, may make something further necessary; and not more necessary for the satisfaction of the colonies than for the dignity and consistency of our own future proceedings.

70 I have taken a very incorrect measure of the disposition of the House, if this proposal in itself would be received with dislike. I think, Sir, we have few

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[1] *Revenue act.* The Stamp Act, 1766.

American financiers. But our misfortune is, we are too acute, we are too exquisite in our conjectures of the future for men oppressed with such great and present evils. The more moderate among the opposers of parliamentary concession freely confess that they hope no good from taxation, but they apprehend the colonists have further views; and if this point were conceded, they would instantly attack the trade laws. These gentlemen are convinced that this was the intention from the beginning, and the quarrel of the Americans with taxation was no more than a cloak and cover to this design. Such has been the language even of a gentleman[1] of real moderation, and of a natural temper well adjusted to fair and equal government. I am, however, Sir, not a little surprised at this kind of discourse, whenever I hear it; and I am the more surprised on account of the arguments which I constantly find in company with it, and which are often urged from the same mouths, and on the same day.

71 For instance, when we allege that it is against reason to tax a people under so many restraints in trade as the Americans, the noble lord in the blue ribbon shall tell you that the restraints on trade are futile and useless, of no advantage to us, and of no burden to those on whom they are imposed; that the trade to America is not secured by the acts of navigation,[2] but by the natural and irresistible advantage of a commercial preference.

72 Such is the merit of the trade laws in this posture of the debate. But when strong internal circum-

[1] *A gentleman.* Mr. Rice.

[2] *Acts of Navigation.* These forbade every other nation from carrying anything to England and her colonies except their own products. This threw the carrying trade chiefly into the hands of England itself.

stances are urged against the taxes; when the scheme is dissected; when experience and the nature of things are brought to prove, and do prove, the utter impossibility of obtaining an effective revenue from the colonies; when these things are pressed, or rather press themselves, so as to drive the advocates of colony taxes to a clear admission of the futility of the scheme; then, Sir, the sleeping trade laws revive from their trance; and this useless taxation is to be kept sacred, not for its own sake, but as a counter-guard and security of the laws of trade.

73 Then, Sir, you keep up revenue laws which are mischievous, in order to preserve trade laws that are useless. Such is the wisdom of our plan in both its members. They are separately given up as of no value; and yet one is always to be defended for the sake of the other. But I can not agree with the noble lord, nor with the pamphlet[1] from whence he seems to have borrowed these ideas concerning the inutility of the trade laws. For, without idolizing them, I am sure they are still, in many ways, of great use to us; and in former times they have been of the greatest. They do confine, and they do greatly narrow, the market to the Americans. But my perfect conviction of this does not help me in the least to discern how the revenue laws form any security whatsoever to the commercial regulations; or that these commercial regulations are the true ground of the quarrel; or that the giving way, in any one instance, of authority, is to lose all that may remain unconceded.

74 One fact is clear and indisputable. The public and avowed origin of this quarrel was on taxation. The quarrel has indeed brought on new disputes on

[1] *Pamphlet.* Written by Dr. Tucker, Dean of Gloucester.

new questions; but certainly the least bitter, and the fewest of all, on the trade laws. To judge which of the two be the real, radical cause of quarrel, we have to see whether the commercial dispute did, in order of time, precede the dispute on taxation. There is not a shadow of evidence for it. Next, to enable us to judge whether at this moment a dislike to the trade laws be the real cause of quarrel, it is absolutely necessary to put the taxes out of the question by a repeal. See how the Americans act in this position, and then you will be able to discern correctly what is the true object of the controversy, or whether any controversy at all will remain. Unless you consent to remove this cause of difference, it is impossible, with decency, to assert that the dispute is not upon what it is avowed to be. And I would, Sir, recommend to your serious consideration, whether it be prudent to form a rule for punishing people, not on their own acts, but on your conjectures. Surely it is preposterous at the very best. It is not justifying your anger by their misconduct, but it is converting your ill will into their delinquency.

75 But the colonies will go farther.[1] Alas! alas! when will this speculating against fact and reason end? What will quiet these panic fears which we entertain of the hostile effect of a conciliatory conduct? Is it true, that no case can exist, in which it is proper for the sovereign to accede to the desires of his discontented subjects? Is there anything peculiar in this case to make a rule for itself? Is all authority of course lost, when it is not pushed to the extreme? Is it a certain maxim that the fewer causes of dissat-

[1] *Go farther; i. e.*, will resist the navigation acts. This was the objection made by Burke's opponents.

isfaction are left by government, the more the subject will be inclined to resist and rebel?

76 All these objections being in fact no more than suspicions, conjectures, divinations, formed in defiance of fact and experience, they did not, Sir, discourage me from entertaining the idea of a conciliatory concession, founded on the principles which I have just stated.

77 In forming a plan for this purpose, I endeavored to put myself in that frame of mind which was the most natural, and the most reasonable; and which was certainly the most probable means of securing me from all error. I set out with a perfect distrust of my own abilities, a total renunciation of every speculation of my own, and with a profound reverence for the wisdom of our ancestors, who have left us the inheritance of so happy a constitution, and so flourishing an empire, and what is a thousand times more valuable, the treasury of the maxims and principles which formed the one, and obtained the other.

78 During the reigns of the kings of Spain of the Austrian family, whenever they were at a loss in the Spanish councils, it was common for their statesmen to say that they ought to consult the genius of Philip the Second.[1] The genius of Philip the Second might mislead them; and the issue of their affairs showed that they had not chosen the most perfect standard. But, Sir, I am sure that I shall not be misled, when, in a case of constitutional difficulty, I consult the genius of the English constitution. Consulting at that oracle (it was with all due humility and piety), I found four capital examples in a similar case before me: those of Ireland, Wales, Chester, and Durham.

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[1] *Philip the Second.* King of Spain, 1556 1598.

79 Ireland, before the English conquest, though never governed by a despotic power, had no parliament. How far the English parliament itself was at that time modeled according to the present form, is disputed among antiquarians. But we have all the reason in the world to be assured that a form of parliament, such as England then enjoyed, she instantly communicated to Ireland; and we are equally sure that almost every successive improvement in constitutional liberty, as fast as it was made here, was transmitted thither. The feudal baronage and the feudal knighthood, the roots of our primitive constitution, were early transplanted into that soil, and grew and flourished there. Magna Charta, if it did not give us originally the House of Commons, gave us at least a House of Commons of weight and consequence. But your ancestors did not churlishly sit down alone to the feast of Magna Charta. Ireland was made immediately a partaker. This benefit of English laws and liberties, I confess, was not at first extended to *all* Ireland.[1] Mark the consequence. English authority and English liberties had exactly the same boundaries. Your standard could never be advanced an inch before your privileges. Sir John Davis[2] shows beyond a doubt that the refusal of a general communication of these rights was the true cause why Ireland was five hundred years in subduing; and after the vain projects of a military government, attempted in the reign of

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[1] *All Ireland.* "The English settlers in Ireland, after the invasion of Strongbow, kept themselves within certain limits distinct from the natives, called "The Pale." They enjoyed English law, while the natives were for a long time denied it; and this gave rise to incessant contentions. By an act of James I, the privileges of The Pale were extended to all Ireland."

[2] *Sir John Davis.* Solicitor-general to Ireland, 1603. In 1612 he published a work on the political state of that country.

Queen Elizabeth, it was soon discovered that nothing could make that country English, in civility and allegiance, but your laws and your forms of legislature. It was not English arms, but the English constitution, that conquered Ireland. From that time, Ireland has ever had a general parliament, as she had before a partial parliament. You changed the people; you altered the religion; but you never touched the form or the vital substance of free government in that kingdom. You deposed kings; you restored them; you altered the succession to theirs, as well as to your own crown; but you never altered their constitution, the principle of which was respected by usurpation, restored with the restoration of monarchy, and established, I trust, forever, by the glorious Revolution. This has made Ireland the great and flourishing kingdom that it is; and from a disgrace and a burden intolerable to this nation, has rendered her a principal part of our strength and ornament. This country can not be said to have ever formally taxed her. The irregular things done in the confusion of mighty troubles, and on the hinge of great revolutions, even if all were done that is said to have been done, form no example. If they have any effect in argument, they make an exception to prove the rule. None of your own liberties could stand a moment if the casual deviations from them, at such times, were suffered to be used as proofs of their nullity. By the lucrative amount of such casual breaches in the constitution, judge what the stated and fixed rule of supply has been in that kingdom. Your Irish pensioners would starve if they had no other fund to live on than taxes granted by English authority. Turn your eyes to those popular grants from whence all your great supplies are come, and

learn to respect that only source of public wealth in the British empire.

80 My next example is Wales. This country was said to be reduced by Henry the Third.[1] It was said more truly to be so by Edward the First. But though then conquered, it was not looked upon as any part of the realm of England. Its old constitution, whatever that might have been, was destroyed, and no good one was substituted in its place. The care of that tract was put into the hands of lords marchers[2] — a form of government of a very singular kind ; a strange heterogeneous monster, something between hostility and government ; perhaps it has a sort of resemblance, according to the modes of those times, to that of commander-in-chief at present, to whom all civil power is granted as secondary. The manners of the Welsh nation followed the genius of the government ; the people were ferocious, restive, savage, and uncultivated ; sometimes composed, never pacified. Wales, within itself, was in perpetual disorder ; and it kept the frontier of England in perpetual alarm. Benefits from it to the state there were none. Wales was only known to England by incursion and invasion.

81 Sir, during that state of things, parliament was not idle. They attempted to subdue the fierce spirit of the Welsh by all sorts of rigorous laws. They prohibited by statute the sending all sorts of arms into Wales, as you prohibit by proclamation (with some-

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[1] *Henry the Third.* Wales was held in vassalage by Henry III through its Prince Llewellen, who in this way purchased the aid of Henry against a rebellious son; but the country was not reduced under English sway as part of the kingdom till the time of Edward I, 1272–1307.

[2] *Lords marchers.* The owners of the border lands between England and Wales. The conqueror of these lands had the authority of a king over them.

thing more of doubt on the legality) the sending arms to America. They disarmed the Welsh by statute, as you attempted (but still with more question on the legality) to disarm New England by an instruction. They made an act to drag offenders from Wales into England for trial, as you have done (but with more hardship) with regard to America. By another act, where one of the parties was an Englishman, they ordained that his trial should be always by English. They made acts to restrain trade, as you do ; and they prevented the Welsh from the use of fairs and markets, as you do the Americans from fisheries and foreign ports. In short, when the statute book was not quite so much swelled as it is now, you find no less than fifteen acts of penal regulation on the subject of Wales.

82 Here we rub our hands — a fine body of precedents for the authority of parliament and the use of it ! — I admit it fully ; and pray add likewise to these precedents that, all the while, Wales rid this kingdom like an *incubus ;* that it was an unprofitable and oppressive burden ; and that an Englishman traveling in that country could not go six yards from the high road without being murdered.

83 The march of the human mind is slow. Sir, it was not until after two hundred years discovered that, by an eternal law, Providence had decreed vexation to violence, and poverty to rapine. Your ancestors did, however, at length open their eyes to the ill husbandry of injustice. They found that the tyranny of a free people could of all tyrannies the least be endured; and that laws made against a whole nation were not the most effectual methods for securing its obedience. Accordingly, in the twenty-seventh year of Henry VIII the course was entirely altered.

With a preamble stating the entire and perfect rights of the crown of England, it gave to the Welsh all the rights and privileges of English subjects. A political order was established; the military power gave way to the civil; the marches were turned into counties. But that a nation should have a right to English liberties, and yet no share at all in the fundamental security of these liberties — the grant of their own property — seemed a thing so incongruous that, eight years after, that is, in the thirty-fifth of that reign, a complete, and not ill-proportioned representation by counties and boroughs was bestowed upon Wales, by act of parliament. From that moment, as by a charm, the tumults subsided, obedience was restored, peace, order, and civilization followed in the train of liberty. When the day-star of the English constitution had arisen in their hearts, all was harmony within and without —

> — Simul alba nautis
> Stella refulsit
> Defluit saxis agitatus humor;
> Concidunt venti, fugiúntque nubes,
> Et minax (quòd sic voluere) ponto
> Unda recumbit.[1]

84 The very same year the county palatine[2] of Chester received the same relief from its oppressions, and the same remedy to its disorders. Before this

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[1] *Simul — recumbit.*
When *their* auspicious star
To the sailor shines afar,
The troubled waters leave the rocks at rest:
The clouds are gone, the winds are still,
The angry wave obeys their will,
And calmly sleeps upon the ocean's breast.
The allusion is to Castor and Pollux, the patron deities of mariners, and the effect of their constellation (The Twins) in composing tempests.

[2] *County palatine.* A county in which the owner had royal power.

time Chester was little less distempered than Wales. The inhabitants, without rights themselves, were the fittest to destroy the rights of others; and from thence Richard II drew the standing army of archers, with which for a time he oppressed England. The people of Chester applied to parliament in a petition penned as I shall read to you: —

85 "To the king our sovereign lord, in most humble wise shown unto your excellent Majesty, the inhabitants of your Grace's county palatine of Chester; That where the said county palatine of Chester is and hath been always hitherto exempt, excluded, and separated out and from your high court of parliament, to have any knights and burgesses within the said court; by reason whereof the said inhabitants have hitherto sustained manifold disherisons, losses, and damages, as well in their lands, goods, and bodies, as in the good, civil, and politic governance and maintenance of the commonwealth of their said country: (2) And forasmuch as the said inhabitants have always hitherto been bound by the acts and statutes made and ordained by your said Highness, and your most noble progenitors, by authority of the said court, as far forth as other counties, cities, and boroughs have been, that have had their knights and burgesses within your said court of parliament, and yet have had neither knight nor burgess there for the said county palatine; the said inhabitants, for lack thereof, have been oftentimes touched and grieved with acts and statutes made within the said court, as well derogatory unto the most ancient jurisdictions, liberties, and privileges of your said county palatine, as prejudicial unto the commonwealth, quietness, rest, and peace of your Grace's most bounden subjects inhabiting within the same."

86 What did parliament with this audacious address? — Reject it as a libel? Treat it as an affront to government? Spurn it as a derogation from the rights of legislature? Did they toss it over the table? Did they burn it by the hands of the common hangman? They took the petition of grievance, all rugged as it was, without softening or temperament, unpurged of the original bitterness and indignation of complaint; they made it the very preamble to their act of redress, and consecrated its principle to all ages in the sanctuary of legislation.

87 Here is my third example. It was attended with the success of the two former. Chester, civilized as well as Wales, has demonstrated that freedom, and not servitude, is the cure of anarchy; as religion, and not atheism, is the true remedy for superstition. Sir, this pattern of Chester was followed in the reign of Charles II with regard to the county palatine of Durham, which is my fourth example. This county had long lain out of the pale[1] of free legislation. So scrupulously was the example of Chester followed that the style of the preamble is nearly the same with that of the Chester act, and, without affecting the abstract extent of the authority of parliament, it recognizes the equity of not suffering any considerable district, in which the British subjects may act as a body, to be taxed without their own voice in the grant.

88 Now if the doctrines of policy contained in these preambles, and the force of these examples in the acts of parliament, avail anything, what can be said against applying them with regard to America? Are not the people of America as much Englishmen as the Welsh? The preamble of the act of Henry VIII says the Welsh speak a language no way resembling that

[1] *Out of the pale.* See note on paragraph 79.

of His Majesty's English subjects. Are the Americans not as numerous? If we may trust the learned and accurate Judge Barrington's [1] account of North Wales, and take that as a standard to measure the rest, there is no comparison. The people can not amount to above 200,000; not a tenth part of the number in the colonies. Is America in rebellion? Wales was hardly ever free from it. Have you attempted to govern America by penal statutes? You made fifteen for Wales. But your legislative authority is perfect with regard to America; was it less perfect in Wales, Chester, and Durham? But America is virtually represented. What! does the electric force of virtual representation more easily pass over the Atlantic than pervade Wales, which lies in your neighborhood, or than Chester and Durham, surrounded by abundance of representation that is actual and palpable? But, Sir, your ancestors thought this sort of virtual representation, however ample, to be totally insufficient for the freedom of the inhabitants of territories that are so near, and comparatively so inconsiderable. How, then, can I think it sufficient for those which are infinitely greater, and infinitely more remote?

89 You will now, Sir, perhaps, imagine that I am on the point of proposing to you a scheme for a representation of the colonies in parliament. Perhaps I might be inclined to entertain some such thought; but a great flood stops me in my course. *Opposuit natura* [2] — I can not remove the eternal barriers of the creation. The thing, in that mode, I do not know to be possible. As I meddle with no theory, I do not absolutely assert the impracticability

[1] *Judge Barrington.* Appointed judge in three counties in Wales 1757.

[2] *Opposuit natura.* "Nature forbids." — *Juvenal, Satires, X, 152.*

of such a representation. But I do not see my way to it ; and those who have been more confident have not been more successful. However, the arm of public benevolence is not shortened ; and there are often several means to the same end. What nature has disjoined in one way, wisdom may unite in another. When we can not give the benefit as we would wish, let us not refuse it altogether. If we can not give the principal, let us find a substitute. But how ? Where ? What substitute ?

90 Fortunately I am not obliged for the ways and means of this substitute to tax my own unproductive invention. I am not even obliged to go to the rich treasury of the fertile framers of imaginary commonwealths ; not to the Republic of Plato ; not to the Utopia of More ; not to the Oceana of Harrington. It is before me — it is at my feet, —

> — and the rude swain
> Treads daily on it with his clouted shoon.[1]

I only wish you to recognize, for the theory, the ancient constitutional policy of this kingdom with regard to representation, as that policy has been declared in acts of parliament ; and, as to the practise, to return to that mode which a uniform experience has marked out to you as best ; and in which you walked with security, advantage, and honor, until the year 1763.[2]

91 My resolutions therefore mean to establish the equity and justice of a taxation of America, by *grant*, and not by *imposition*. To mark the *legal competency* of the colony assemblies for the support of their government in peace, and for public aids in time of

[1] *And — shoon. — Milton's Comus, 634, 635.*
[2] *1763.* The year of passing the Stamp Act.

war. To acknowledge that this legal competency has had *a dutiful and beneficial exercise ;* and that experience has shown the *benefit of their grants*, and the *futility of parliamentary taxation as a method of supply.*

92 These solid truths compose six fundamental propositions. There are three more resolutions corollary to these. If you admit the first set, you can hardly reject the others. But if you admit the first, I shall be far from solicitous whether you accept or refuse the last. I think these six massive pillars will be of strength sufficient to support the temple of British concord.[1] I have no more doubt than I entertain of my existence that, if you admitted these, you would command an immediate peace, and, with but tolerable future management, a lasting obedience in America. I am not arrogant in this confident assurance. The propositions are all mere matters of fact ; and if they are such facts as draw irresistible conclusions even in the stating, this is the power of truth, and not any management of mine.

93 Sir, I shall open the whole plan to you, together with such observations on the motions as may tend to illustrate them where they may want explanation. The first is a resolution : "That the colonies and plantations of Great Britain in North America, consisting of fourteen separate governments, and containing two million and upward of free inhabitants, have not had the liberty and privilege of electing and sending any knights and burgesses, or others, to represent them in the high court of parliament." This is a plain matter of fact, necessary to be laid down, and (excepting the description) it is laid down

[1] *Concord.* The Romans had a temple dedicated to Concord.

in the language of the constitution ; it is taken nearly *verbatim* from acts of parliament.

94 The second is like unto the first : "That the said colonies and plantations have been liable to, and bounden by, several subsidies, payments, rates, and taxes, given and granted by parliament, though the said colonies and plantations have not their knights and burgesses in the said high court of parliament, of their own election, to represent the condition of their country ; by lack whereof they have been oftentimes touched and grieved by subsidies given, granted, and assented to, in the said court, in a manner prejudicial to the commonwealth, quietness, rest, and peace of the subjects inhabiting within the same."

95 Is this description too hot, or too cold, too strong, or too weak? Does it arrogate too much to the supreme legislature? Does it lean too much to the claims of the people? If it runs into any of these errors, the fault is not mine. It is the language of your own ancient acts of parliament.

> Non meus hic sermo, sed quæ præcepit Ofellus,
> Rusticus, abnormis sapiens.[1]

It is the genuine produce of the ancient, rustic, manly, home-bred sense of this country. I did not dare to rub off a particle of the venerable rust that rather adorns and preserves than destroys the metal. It would be a profanation to touch with a tool[2] the stones which construct the sacred altar of peace. I would not violate with modern polish the ingenious and

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[1] *Non — sapiens.*

The precept is not mine,
Ofellus gave it in his rustic strain,
Irregular, but wise.— *Horace, Satires, I, 2.*

Ofellus was a Sabine peasant, in whose mouth the poet puts this satire.

[2] *Touch with a tool.* See Exodus xx, 25.

noble roughness of these truly constitutional materials. Above all things, I was resolved not to be guilty of tampering; the odious vice of restless and unstable minds. I put my foot in the tracks of our forefathers, where I can neither wander nor stumble. Determining to fix articles of peace, I was resolved not to be wise beyond what was written; I was resolved to use nothing else than the form of sound words, to let others abound in their own sense, and carefully to abstain from all expressions of my own. What the law has said, I say. In all things else I am silent. I have no organ but for her words. This, if it be not ingenious, I am sure is safe.

96 There are indeed words expressive of grievance in this second resolution, which those who are resolved always to be in the right will deny to contain matter of fact, as applied to the present case, although parliament thought them true, with regard to the counties of Chester and Durham. They will deny that the Americans were ever "touched and grieved" with the taxes. If they consider nothing in taxes but their weight as pecuniary impositions, there might be some pretense for this denial. But men may be sorely touched and deeply grieved in their privileges, as well as in their purses. Men may lose little in property by the act which takes away all their freedom. When a man is robbed of a trifle on the highway, it is not the twopence lost that constitutes the capital outrage. This is not confined to privileges. Even ancient indulgences withdrawn, without offense, on the part of those who enjoyed such favors, operate as grievances. But were the Americans then not touched and grieved by the taxes, in some measure, merely as taxes? If so, why were they almost all either wholly repealed or exceedingly reduced? Were they not

touched and grieved even by the regulating duties of the sixth of George II?[1] Else why were the duties first reduced to one third in 1764, and afterward to a third of that third in the year 1766? Were they not touched and grieved by the stamp act? I shall say they were, until that tax is revived. Were they not touched and grieved by the duties of 1767, which were likewise repealed, and which Lord Hillsborough[2] tells you (for the ministry) were laid contrary to the true principle of commerce? Is not the assurance given by that noble person to the colonies of a resolution to lay no more taxes on them, an admission that taxes would touch and grieve them? Is not the resolution of the noble lord in the blue ribbon, now standing on your journals, the strongest of all proofs that parliamentary subsidies really touched and grieved them? Else why all these changes, modifications, repeals, assurances, and resolutions?

97 The next proposition is, "That from the distance of the said colonies, and from other circumstances, no method hath hitherto been devised for procuring a representation in parliament for the said colonies." This is an assertion of a fact. I go no further on the paper, though in my private judgment, a useful representation is impossible; I am sure it is not desired by them, nor ought it perhaps by us, but I abstain from opinions.

98 The fourth resolution is, "That each of the said colonies hath within itself a body, chosen in part, or in the whole, by the freemen, freeholders, or other free inhabitants thereof, commonly called the General

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[1] *George II.* An act for the better securing of the trade of His Majesty's sugar colonies in America.

[2] *Lord Hillsborough.* Secretary of State for the colonies, 1768–1772.

Assembly, or General Court; with powers legally to raise, levy, and assess, according to the several usages of such colonies, duties, and taxes toward defraying all sorts of public services."

99 This competence in the colony assemblies is certain. It is proved by the whole tenor of their acts of supply in all the assemblies, in which the constant style of granting is "an aid[1] to his Majesty;" and acts granting to the crown have regularly for nearly a century passed the public offices without dispute. Those who have been pleased paradoxically to deny this right, holding that none but the British parliament can grant to the crown, are wished to look to what is done, not only in the colonies, but in Ireland, in one uniform unbroken tenor every session. Sir, I am surprised that this doctrine should come from some of the law servants of the crown. I say that if the crown[2] could be responsible, His Majesty — but certainly the ministers, and even these law officers themselves, through whose hands the acts pass biennially in Ireland, or annually in the colonies, are in a habitual course of committing impeachable offenses. What habitual offenders have been all presidents of the council,[3] all secretaries of state, all first lords of trade, all attorneys, and all solicitors-general! However, they are safe; as no one impeaches them, and there is no ground of charge against them, except in their own unfounded theories.

100 The fifth resolution is also a resolution of fact:

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[1] *An aid.* Aids were originally grants of money made by tenant. to their lords of their own free will. Afterward they became real taxes.

[2] *The crown.* "The king can do no wrong," but his ministers are blamed for any official fault.

[3] *Council.* The Privy Council, a body of select advisers to the sovereign.

"That the said general assemblies, general courts, or other bodies legally qualified as aforesaid, have at sundry times freely granted several large subsidies and public aids for His Majesty's service, according to their abilities, when required thereto by letter from one of His Majesty's principal secretaries of state; and that their right to grant the same, and their cheerfulness and sufficiency in the said grants have been at sundry times acknowledged by parliament." To say nothing of their great expenses in the Indian wars; and not to take their exertion in foreign ones, so high as the supplies in the year 1695; not to go back to their public contributions in the year 1710; I shall begin to travel only where the journals give me light, resolving to deal in nothing but fact authenticated by parliamentary record, and to build myself wholly on that solid basis.

101 On the fourth of April, 1748, a committee of this House came to the following resolution: —

"*Resolved:* That it is the opinion of this committee, *That it is just and reasonable* that the several provinces and colonies of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island be reimbursed the expenses they have been at in taking and securing to the crown of Great Britain, the island of Cape Breton and its dependencies."

102 These expenses were immense for such colonies. They were above £200,000 sterling, money first raised and advanced on their public credit.

103 On the 28th of January, 1756, a message from the king came to us, to this effect: "His Majesty, being sensible of the zeal and vigor with which his faithful subjects of certain colonies in North America have exerted themselves in defense of His Majesty's just rights and possessions, recommends it to this

House to take the same into their consideration, and to enable His Majesty to give them such assistance as may be a *proper reward and encouragement.*"

104 On the third of February, 1756, the House came to a suitable resolution, expressed in words nearly the same as those of the message, but with the further addition that the money then voted was an *encouragement* to the colonies to exert themselves with vigor. It will not be necessary to go through all the testimonies which your own records have given to the truth of my resolutions, I will only refer you to the places in the journals: —

Vol. XXVII.— May 16 and 19, 1757.

Vol. XXVIII.—June 1, 1758; April 26 and 30, 1759; March 26 and 31 and April 28, 1760; January 9 and 20, 1761.

Vol. XXIX.—January 22 and 26, 1762; March 14 and 17, 1763.

105 Sir, here is the repeated acknowledgment of parliament that the colonies not only gave, but gave to satiety. This nation has formally acknowledged two things; first, that the colonies had gone beyond their abilities, parliament having thought it necessary to reimburse them; secondly, that they had acted legally and laudably in their grants of money, and their maintenance of troops, since the compensation is expressly given as reward and encouragement. Reward is not bestowed for acts that are unlawful, and encouragement is not held out to things that deserve reprehension. My resolution therefore does nothing more than collect into one proposition what is scattered through your journals. I give you nothing but your own, and you can not refuse in the gross what you have so often acknowledged in detail. The admission of this, which will be so honorable to them and to you, will,

indeed, be mortal to all the miserable stories, by which the passions of the misguided people have been engaged in an unhappy system. The people heard, indeed, from the beginning of these disputes, one thing continually dinned in their ears, that reason and justice demanded that the Americans, who paid no taxes, should be compelled to contribute. How did that fact of their paying nothing stand, when the taxing system began? When Mr. Grenville[1] began to form his system of American revenue, he stated in this House that the colonies were then in debt two million six hundred thousand pounds sterling money, and was of opinion they would discharge that debt in four years. On this state, those untaxed people were actually subject to the payment of taxes to the amount of six hundred and fifty thousand a year. In fact, however, Mr. Grenville was mistaken. The funds given for sinking the debt did not prove quite so ample as both the colonies and he expected. The calculation was too sanguine; the reduction was not completed till some years after, and at different times in different colonies. However, the taxes after the war continued too great to bear any addition, with prudence or propriety; and when the burdens imposed in consequence of former requisitions[2] were discharged, our tone became too high to resort again to requisition. No colony since that time ever has had any requisition whatsoever made to it.

106 We see the sense of the crown, and the sense

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[1] *Mr. Grenville.* First Lord of the Treasury and chancellor of the Exchequer, 1763–1765. Author of a plan to tax the colonies, and said to have originated the Stamp Act.

[2] *Requisitions.* Demands for money from the colonies. The colonial legislature might refuse to grant these. Burke insists on the fundamental difference between money thus secured and taxes imposed by parliament without any act of the colonial legislatures.

of parliament, on the productive nature of a *revenue by grant.* Now search the same journals for the produce of the *revenue by imposition :* Where is it? Let us know the volume and the page. What is the gross, what is the net produce? To what service is it applied? How have you appropriated its surplus? What, can none of the many skilful index-makers that we are now employing find any trace of it? — Well, let them and that rest together. But are the journals, which say nothing of the revenue, as silent on the discontent? — Oh, no! a child may find it. It is the melancholy burden and blot of every page.

107 I think then I am, from those journals, justified in the sixth and last resolution, which is, "That it hath been found by experience that the manner of granting the said supplies and aids, by the said general assemblies, hath been more agreeable to the said colonies, and more beneficial, and conducive to the public service, than the mode of giving and granting aids in parliament, to be raised and paid in the said colonies." This makes the whole of the fundamental part of the plan. The conclusion is irresistible. You can not say that you were driven by any necessity to an exercise of the utmost rights of legislature. You can not assert that you took on yourselves the task of imposing colony taxes, from the want of another legal body,[1] that is competent to the purpose of supplying the exigencies of the state without wounding the prejudices of the people. Neither is it true that the body so qualified, and having that competence, had neglected the duty.

108 The question now, on all this accumulated matter is, whether you will choose to abide by

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[1] *Another legal body.* The colonial legislatures.

a profitable experience, or a mischievous theory; whether you choose to build on imagination, or fact; whether you prefer enjoyment, or hope; satisfaction in your subjects, or discontent.

109 If these propositions are accepted, everything which has been made to enforce a contrary system, must I take it for granted, fall along with it. On that ground, I have drawn the following resolution, which, when it comes to be moved, will naturally be divided in a proper manner: "That it may be proper to repeal an act, made in the seventh year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, An act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America; for allowing a drawback of the duties of customs upon the exportation from this kingdom, of coffee and cocoanuts of the produce of the said colonies or plantations; for discontinuing the drawbacks payable on China earthenware exported to America; and for more effectually preventing the clandestine running of goods in the said colonies and plantations: and that it may be proper to repeal an act, made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, An act to discontinue, in such manner, and for such time, as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading or shipping of goods, wares, and merchandise, at the town and within the harbor of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts Bay in North America: and that it may be proper to repeal an act, made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, An act for the impartial administration of justice, in the cases of persons questioned for any acts done by them, in the execution of the law, or for the suppression of riots and tumults, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England: and that it

may be proper to repeal an act, made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, An act for the better regulating the government of the province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England: and, also, that it may be proper to explain and amend an act, made in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth, entitled, An act for the trial of treasons committed out of the king's dominions."

110 I wish, Sir, to repeal the Boston Port Bill, because (independently of the dangerous precedent of suspending the rights of the subject during the king's pleasure[1]) it was passed, as I apprehend, with less regularity, and on more partial principles, than it ought. The corporation of Boston was not heard before it was condemned. Other towns, full as guilty as she was, have not had their ports blocked up. Even the restraining bill[2] of the present session does not go to the length of the Boston Port Act. The same ideas of prudence, which induced you not to extend equal punishment to equal guilt, even when you were punishing, induced me, who mean not to chastise, but to reconcile, to be satisfied with the punishment already partially inflicted.

111 Ideas of prudence and accommodation to circumstances, prevent you from taking away the charters of Connecticut and Rhode Island, as you have taken away that of Massachusetts colony, though the crown has far less power[3] in the two former provinces than it enjoyed in the latter; and though the abuses have been full as great, and as flagrant, in the exempted as

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[1] *King's pleasure.* The bill gave the king power to decide when the port should be reopened.

[2] *Restraining bill.* See note on [1].

[3] *Less power.* The crown did not have the veto power in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

in the punished. The same reasons of prudence and accommodation have weight with me in restoring the charter of Massachusetts Bay. Besides, Sir, the act which changes the charter of Massachusetts is in many particulars so exceptionable, that if I did not wish absolutely to repeal, I would by all means desire to alter it, as several of its provisions tend to the subversion of all public and private justice. Such, among others, is the power in the governor to change the sheriff at his pleasure, and to make a new returning officer for every special cause. It is shameful to behold such a regulation standing among English laws.

112 The act for bringing persons accused of committing murder under the orders of government to England for trial is but temporary.[1] That act has calculated the probable duration of our quarrel with the colonies; and is accommodated to that supposed duration. I would hasten the happy moment of reconciliation, and therefore must, on my principle, get rid of that most justly obnoxious act.

113 The act of Henry the Eighth, for the trial of treasons, I do not mean to take away, but to confine it to its proper bounds and original intention, to make it expressly for trial of treasons (and the greatest treasons may be committed) in places where the jurisdiction of the crown does not extend.

114 Having guarded the privileges of local legislature, I would next secure to the colonies a fair and unbiased judicature; for which purpose, Sir, I propose the following resolution: "That, from the time when the general assembly or general court of any colony or plantation in North America, shall have appointed by act of assembly, duly confirmed, a

[1] *Temporary.* The Act was in force for three years from June 1, 1774.

settled salary to the offices of the chief justice and other judges of the superior court, it may be proper that the said chief justice and other judges of the superior courts of such colony, shall hold his and their office and offices during their good behavior; and shall not be removed therefrom, but when the said removal shall be adjudged by His Majesty in council, upon a hearing on complaint from the general assembly, or on a complaint from the governor, or council, or the house of representatives severally, of the colony in which the said chief justice and other judges have exercised the said offices."

115 The next resolution relates to the courts of admiralty. It is this: "That it may be proper to regulate the courts of admiralty, or vice-admiralty, authorized by the fifteenth chapter of the fourth of George the Third, in such a manner as to make the same more commodious to those who sue, or are sued, in the said courts, and to provide for the more decent maintenance[1] of the judges in the same."

116 These courts I do not wish to take away; they are in themselves proper establishments. This court is one of the capital securities of the act of navigation. The extent of its jurisdiction, indeed, has been increased; but this is altogether as proper, and is indeed on many accounts more eligible, where new powers were wanted, than a court absolutely new. But courts incommodiously situated, in effect, deny justice; and a court, partaking in the fruits of its own condemnation, is a robber. The congress complain, and complain justly, of this grievance.[2]

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[1] *Maintenance.* These judges were tempted to commit extortion because their income was derived from the fines they imposed.

[2] *Grievance.* The solicitor-general informed Mr. Burke when his resolutions were moved separately, that the grievance of the judges partaking of the profits of the seizure had been redressed; accordingly the resolution was amended.

117 These are the three consequential propositions. I have thought of two or three more; but they come rather too near detail, and to the province of executive government; which I wish parliament always to superintend, never to assume. If the first six are granted, congruity will carry the latter three. If not, the things that remain unrepealed will be, I hope, rather unseemly encumbrances on the building, than very materially detrimental to its strength and stability.

118 Here, Sir, I should close; but I plainly perceive some objections remain, which I ought, if possible, to remove. The first will be that, in resorting to the doctrine of our ancestors, as contained in the preamble to the Chester act, I prove too much; that the grievance from a want of representation, stated in that preamble, goes to the whole of legislation as well as to taxation. And that the colonies, grounding themselves upon that doctrine, will apply it to all parts of legislative authority.

119 To this objection, with all possible deference and humility, and wishing as little as any man living to impair the smallest particle of our supreme authority, I answer that *the words are the words of parliament, and not mine;* and, that all false and inconclusive inferences, drawn from them, are not mine; for I heartily disclaim any such inference. I have chosen the words of an act of parliament, which Mr. Grenville, surely a tolerably zealous and very judicious advocate for the sovereignty of parliament, formerly moved to have read at your table in confirmation of his tenets. It is true that Lord Chatham considered these preambles as declaring strongly in favor of his opinions. He was a no less powerful advocate for the privileges of the Americans. Ought I

not from hence to presume that these preambles are as favorable as possible to both, when properly understood; favorable both to the rights of parliament, and to the privilege of the dependencies of this crown? But, Sir, the object of grievance in my resolution I have not taken from the Chester, but from the Durham act, which confines the hardship of want of representation to the case of subsidies; and which therefore falls in exactly with the case of the colonies. But whether the unrepresented counties were *de jure*, or *de facto*, bound, the preambles do not accurately distinguish; nor indeed was it necessary; for, whether *de jure* or *de facto*, the legislature thought the exercise of the power of taxing, as of right, or as of fact without right, equally a grievance, and equally oppressive.

120 I do not know that the colonies have, in any general way, or in any cool hour, gone much beyond the demand of immunity in relation to taxes. It is not fair to judge of the temper or dispositions of any man, or any set of men, when they are composed and at rest, from their conduct, or their expressions, in a state of disturbance and irritation. It is besides a very great mistake to imagine that mankind follows up practically any speculative principle, either of government or of freedom, as far as it will go in argument and logical illation. We Englishmen stop very short of the principles upon which we support any given part of our constitution; or even the whole of it together. I could easily, if I had not already tired you, give you very striking and convincing instances of it. This is nothing but what is natural and proper. All government, indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue, and every prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter. We balance inconveniences; we give and take; we remit some

rights that we may enjoy others; and we choose rather to be happy citizens than subtle disputants. As we must give away some natural liberty to enjoy civil advantages, so we must sacrifice some civil liberties, for the advantages to be derived from the communion and fellowship of a great empire. But, in all fair dealings, the thing bought must bear some proportion to the purchase paid. None will barter away the immediate jewel[1] of his soul. Though a great house is apt to make slaves haughty, yet it is purchasing a part of the artificial importance of a great empire too dear, to pay for it all essential rights, and all the intrinsic dignity of human nature. None of us who would not risk his life rather than fall under a government purely arbitrary. But although there are some among us who think our constitution wants many improvements, to make it a complete system of liberty, perhaps none who are of that opinion would think it right to aim at such improvement, by disturbing his country, and risking everything that is dear to him. In every arduous enterprise, we consider what we are to lose as well as what we are to gain; and the more and better stake of liberty every people possess, the less they will hazard in a vain attempt to make it more. These are *the cords of man.* Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interest; and not on metaphysical speculations. Aristotle,[2] the great master of reasoning, cautions us, and with great weight and propriety, against this species of delusive geometrical accuracy in moral arguments, as the most fallacious of all sophistry.

[1] *Immediate jewel.*

Good name in man and woman, dear, my Lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.

— *Othello Act III, Scene v.*

[2] *Aristotle.— Ethics I, iii.*

121 The Americans will have no interest contrary to the grandeur and glory of England, when they are not oppressed by the weight of it, and they will rather be inclined to respect the acts of a superintending legislature, when they see them the acts of that power, which is itself the security, not the rival, of their secondary importance. In this assurance, my mind most perfectly acquiesces, and I confess, I feel not the least alarm from the discontents which are to arise from putting people at their ease; nor do I apprehend the destruction of this empire, from giving, by an act of free grace and indulgence, to two millions of my fellow citizens some share of those rights upon which I have always been taught to value myself.

122 It is said, indeed, that this power of granting, vested in American assemblies, would dissolve the unity of the empire, which was preserved entire, although Wales, and Chester, and Durham were added to it. Truly, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what this unity means; nor has it ever been heard of, that I know, in the constitutional policy of this country. The very idea of subordination of parts, excludes this notion of simple and undivided unity. England is the head, but she is not the head and the members, too. Ireland has ever had from the beginning a separate, but not an independent legislature,[1] which, far from distracting, promoted the union of the whole. Everything was sweetly and harmoniously disposed through both islands for the conservation of English dominion, and the communication of English liberties. I do not see that the same principles might not be carried into twenty islands, and with the same good effect. This is my model with regard to America, as far as the internal circumstances of the two countries are

[1] *Legislature.* Abolished in 1800.

the same. I know no other unity of this empire than I can draw from its example during these periods, when it seemed to my poor understanding more united than it is now, or than it is likely to be by the present methods.

123 But since I speak of these methods, I recollect, Mr. Speaker, almost too late, that I promised, before I finished, to say something of the proposition of the noble lord on the floor, which has been so lately received, and stands on your journals. I must be deeply concerned, whenever it is my misfortune to continue a difference with the majority of this House. But as the reasons for that difference are my apology for thus troubling you, suffer me to state them in a very few words. I shall compress them into as small a body as I possibly can, having already debated that matter at large, when the question was before the committee.

124 First, then, I can not admit that proposition of a ransom by auction; because it is a mere project. It is a new thing, unheard of, supported by no experience, justified by no analogy, without example of our ancestors, or root in the constitution. It is neither regular parliamentary taxation nor colony grant. *Experimentum in corpore vili*,[1] is a good rule, which will ever make me adverse to any trial of experiments on what is certainly the most valuable of all subjects, the peace of this empire.

125 Secondly, it is an experiment which must be fatal in the end to our constitution. For what is it but a scheme for taxing the colonies in the antechamber of the noble lord and his successors? To settle the quotas and proportions in this House, is

[1] *Experimentum — vili.* An experiment should be made upon some worthless object.

clearly impossible. You, Sir, may flatter yourself you shall sit a state auctioneer, with your hammer in your hand, and knock down to each colony as it bids. But to settle (on the plan laid down by the noble lord) the true proportional payment for four or five and twenty governments, according to the absolute and the relative wealth of each, and according to the British proportion of wealth and burden, is a wild and chimerical notion. This new taxation must therefore come in by the backdoor of the constitution. Each quota must be brought to this House ready formed; you can neither add nor alter. You must register it. You can do nothing further. For on what grounds can you deliberate either before or after the proposition? You can not hear the counsel for all these provinces, quarreling each on its own quantity of payment, and its proportion to others. If you should attempt it, the committee of provincial ways and means, or by whatever other name it will delight to be called, must swallow up all the time of parliament.

126 Thirdly, it does not give satisfaction to the complaint of the colonies. They complain that they are taxed without their consent; you answer that you will fix the sum at which they shall be taxed; that is, you give them the very grievance for the remedy. You tell them, indeed, that you will leave the mode to themselves. I really beg pardon: it gives me pain to mention it; but you must be sensible that you will not perform this part of the compact. For, suppose the colonies were to lay the duties, which furnished their contingent, upon the importation of your manufactures; you know you would never suffer such a tax to be laid. You know, too, that you would not suffer many other modes of taxa-

tion. So that, when you come to explain yourself, it will be found that you will neither leave to themselves the quantum nor the mode; nor indeed anything. The whole is delusion from one end to the other.

127 Fourthly, this method of ransom by auction, unless it be *universally* accepted, will plunge you into great and inextricable difficulties. In what year of our Lord are the proportions of payments to be settled? To say nothing of the impossibility that colony agents should have general powers of taxing the colonies at their discretion; consider, I implore you, that the communication by special messages, and orders between these agents and their constituents on each variation of the case, when the parties come to contend together, and to dispute on their relative proportions, will be a matter of delay, perplexity, and confusion that never can have an end.

128 If all the colonies do not appear at the outcry, what is the condition of those assemblies, who offer by themselves or their agents, to tax themselves up to your ideas of their proportion? The refractory colonies, who refuse all composition, will remain taxed only to your old impositions, which, however grievous in principle, are trifling as to production. The obedient colonies in this scheme are heavily taxed; the refractory remain unburdened. What will you do? Will you lay new and heavier taxes by parliament on the disobedient? Pray consider in what way you can do it. You are perfectly convinced that, in the way of taxing, you can do nothing but at the ports. Now suppose it is Virginia that refuses to appear at your auction, while Maryland and North Carolina bid handsomely for their ransom, and are taxed to your quota, how will you put these colonies

on a par? Will you tax the tobacco of Virginia? If you do, you give its death-wound [1] to your English revenue at home, and to one of the very greatest articles of your own foreign trade. If you tax the import of that rebellious colony, what do you tax but your own manufactures, or the goods of some other obedient and already well-taxed colony? Who has said one word on this labyrinth of detail, which bewilders you more and more as you enter into it? Who has presented, who can present, you with a clue, to lead you out of it? I think, Sir, it is impossible that you should not recollect that the colony bounds are so implicated in one another (you know it by your other experiments in the bill for prohibiting the New England fishery) that you can lay no possible restraints on almost any of them which may not be presently eluded, if you do not confound the innocent with the guilty, and burden those whom, upon every principle, you ought to exonerate. He must be grossly ignorant of America who thinks that, without falling into this confusion of all rules of equity and policy, you can restrain any single colony, especially Virginia and Maryland, the central and most important of them all.

129 Let it also be considered that either in the present confusion you settle a permanent contingent, which will and must be trifling, and then you have no effectual revenue, or you change the quota at every exigency; and then on every new repartition you will have a new quarrel.

130 Reflect besides, that when you have fixed a quota for every colony, you have not provided for prompt and punctual payment. Suppose one, two,

[1] *Death-wound.* Imported tobacco was already taxed. To impose another tax meant ruin to Virginia.

five, ten years' arrears. You can not issue a treasury extent[1] against the failing colony. You must make new Boston Port Bills, new restraining laws, new acts for dragging men to England for trial. You must send out new fleets, new armies. All is to begin again. From this day forward the empire is never to know an hour's tranquillity. An intestine fire will be kept alive in the bowels of the colonies, which one time or other must consume this whole empire. I allow indeed that the empire of Germany raises her revenue and her troops by quotas and contingents; but the revenue of the empire and the army of the empire is the worst revenue and the worst army in the world.

131 Instead of a standing revenue, you will therefore have a perpetual quarrel. Indeed, the noble lord who proposed this project of a ransom by auction, seemed himself to be of that opinion. His project was rather designed for breaking the union of the colonies than for establishing a revenue. He confessed, he apprehended, that his proposal would not be to *their taste*. I say this scheme of disunion seems to be at the bottom of the project; for I will not suspect that the noble lord meant nothing but merely to delude the nation by an airy phantom which he never intended to realize. But whatever his views may be, as I propose the peace and union of the colonies as the very foundation of my plan, it can not accord with one whose foundation is perpetual discord.

132 Compare the two. This I offer to give you is plain and simple. The other full of perplexed and intricate mazes. This is mild; that harsh. This is

[1] *Treasury extent.* A writ of execution for debts due the crown. Under this writ the body, land, and goods of the debtor might be taken and confiscated.

found by experience effectual for its purposes; the other is a new project. This is universal; the other calculated for certain colonies only. This is immediate in its conciliatory operation; the other remote, contingent, full of hazard. Mine is what becomes the dignity of a ruling people; gratuitous, unconditional, and not held out as matter of bargain and sale. I have done my duty in proposing it to you. I have indeed tired you by a long discourse; but this is the misfortune of those to whose influence nothing will be conceded, and who must win every inch of their ground by argument. You have heard me with goodness. May you decide with wisdom! For my part, I feel my mind greatly disburdened by what I have done to-day. I have been the less fearful of trying your patience, because on this subject I mean to spare it altogether in future. I have this comfort, that in every stage of the American affairs, I have steadily opposed the measures that have produced the confusion, and may bring on the destruction of this empire. I now go so far as to risk a proposal of my own. If I can not give peace to my country, I give it to my conscience.

133 But what, says the financier, is peace to us without money? Your plan gives us no revenue. No! But it does — For it secures to the subject the power of REFUSAL; the first of all revenues. Experience is a cheat, and fact a liar, if this power in the subject of proportioning his grant, or of not granting at all, has not been found the richest mine of revenue ever discovered by the skill or by the fortune of man. It does not indeed vote you £152,750 11s. 2¾d., nor any other paltry limited sum. But it gives the strong box itself, the fund, the bank, from whence only revenues can arise among a people sensible of

freedom: *Posita luditur arca.*[1] Can not you in England; can not you at this time of day; can not you, a House of Commons, trust to the principle which has raised so mighty a revenue, and accumulated a debt of near 140 millions in this country? Is this principle to be true in England, and false everywhere else? Is it not true in Ireland? Has it not hitherto been true in the colonies? Why should you presume that, in any country, a body duly constituted for any function will neglect to perform its duty, and abdicate its trust? Such a presumption would go against all governments in all modes. But, in truth, this dread of penury of supply, from a free assembly, has no foundation in nature. For first observe that, besides the desire which all men have naturally of supporting the honor of their own government, that sense of dignity, and that security to property, which ever attends freedom, has a tendency to increase the stock of the free community. Most may be taken where most is accumulated. And what is the soil or climate where experience has not uniformly proved that the voluntary flow of heaped-up plenty, bursting from the weight of its own rich luxuriance, has ever run with a more copious stream of revenue than could be squeezed from the dry husks of oppressed indigence, by the straining of all the politic machinery in the world?

134 Next we know that parties must ever exist in a

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[1] *Posita — arca.* The quotation is taken from the first Satire of Juvenal, 90th line, where the poet describes the excess to which gambling was then carried on at Rome.

Neque enim loculis comitantibus itur
Ad casum tabulæ, *posita sed luditur arca.*

For now no more the pocket's stores supply,
The boundless charges of the desperate die,
The chest is staked! — *Gifford.*

free country. We know, too, that the emulations of such parties, their contradictions, their reciprocal necessities, their hopes, and their fears, must send them all in their turns to him that holds the balance of the state. The parties are the gamesters, but government keeps the table and is sure to be the winner in the end. When this game is played, I really think it is more to be feared that the people will be exhausted than that government will not be supplied. Whereas, whatever is got by acts of absolute power ill obeyed, because odious, or by contracts ill kept, because constrained, will be narrow, feeble, uncertain, and precarious.

> Ease would retract
> Vows made in pain, as violent and void.[1]

135 I, for one, protest against compounding our demands: I declare against compounding for a poor, limited sum, the immense, ever-growing, eternal debt,[2] which is due to generous government from protected freedom. And so may I speed in the great object I propose to you, as I think it would not only be an act of injustice, but would be the worst economy in the world, to compel the colonies to a sum certain, either in the way of ransom, or in the way of compulsory compact.

136 But to clear up my ideas on this subject: a revenue from America transmitted hither, — do not delude yourselves, — you never can receive it. No, not a shilling. We have experience that from remote countries it is not to be expected. If, when you attempted to extract revenue from Bengal, you were

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[1] *Ease — void.* *Paradise Lost, IV, 96, 97.* Milton has *recant* not retract.

[2] *Eternal debt.* "The debt immense of endless gratitude." — *Milton's Paradise Lost, IV, 53.*

obliged to return in loan [1] what you had taken in imposition, what can you expect from North America? For certainly, if ever there was a country qualified to produce wealth, it is India; or an institution fit for the transmission, it is the East India Company. America has none of these aptitudes. If America gives you taxable objects on which you lay your duties here, and gives you, at the same time, a surplus by a foreign sale of her commodities to pay the duties on these objects which you tax at home, she has performed her part to the British revenue. But with regard to her own internal establishments, she may, I doubt not she will, contribute in moderation. I say in moderation, for she ought not to be permitted to exhaust herself. She ought to be reserved to a war, the weight of which, with the enemies [2] that we are most likely to have, must be considerable in her quarter of the globe. There she may serve you, and serve you essentially.

137 For that service, for all service, whether of revenue, trade, or empire, my trust is in her interest in the British constitution. My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties, which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government, they will cling and grapple to you, and no force under heaven will be of power to tear them from their allegiance. But let it be once understood that your government may be one

[1] *Return in loan.* "The reference is to Lord North's Indian act of 1773, by which £1,400,000 were loaned to the East India Company at four per cent., and the annual payment of £400,000 interest by the company to the government was remitted until the loan should be discharged.

[2] *Enemies.* France and Spain.

thing, and their privileges another; that these two things may exist without any mutual relation; the cement is gone, the cohesion is loosened, and everything hastens to decay and dissolution. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces toward you.[1] The more they multiply, the more friends you will have; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain, they may have it from Prussia. But, until you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none but you. This is the commodity of price, of which you have the monopoly. This in the true act of navigation, which binds to you the commerce of the colonies, and through them secures to you the wealth of the world. Deny them this participation of freedom, and you break that sole bond, which originally made, and must still preserve, the unity of the empire. Do not entertain so weak an imagination, as that your registers and your bonds, you affidavits and your sufferances, your cockets and your clearances, are what form the great securities of your commerce. Do not dream that your letters of office, and your instructions and your suspending clauses, are the things that hold together the great contecture of the mysterious whole. These things do not make your government. Dead instruments, passive tools as they

[1] *Faces toward you.* Allusion to Jewish custom of praying with their faces toward Jerusalem. See 1 Kings viii, 44, 45; Daniel vi, 10.

are, it is the spirit of the English communion that gives all their life and efficacy to them. It is the spirit of the English constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member.[1]

138 Is it not the same virtue which does everything for us here in England? Do you imagine then, that it is the land tax act[2] which raises your revenue? that it is the annual vote in the committee of supply which gives you your army? or that it is the mutiny bill[3] which inspires it with bravery and discipline? — No! surely, no! It is the love of the people; it is their attachment to their government, from the sense of the deep stake they have in such a glorious institution, which gives you your army and your navy, and infuses into both that liberal obedience, without which your army would be a base rabble, and your navy nothing but rotten timber.

139 All this I know well enough will sound wild and chimerical to the profane herd of those vulgar and mechanical politicians, who have no place among us; a sort of people who think that nothing exists but what is gross and material, and who therefore, far from being qualified to be directors of the great movement of empire, are not fit to turn a wheel in the machine. But to men truly initiated and rightly taught, these ruling

[1] *Minutest member.* Burke here makes use of Vergil's description of the animus mundi, Æneid VI, 726, 727.

Spiritus intus alit; totamque infusa per artus.
Meus agitat molem ab magno se corpore misc t

Within a spirit lives: a mind infused
Through every member of that mighty mass,
Pervades, sustains, and actuates the whole.

[2] *Land tax act.* Passed each year for raising revenue.

[3] *Mutiny bill.* Passed each year for discipline in the army and navy.

and master principles, which, in the opinion of such men as I have mentioned, have no substantial existence, are in truth everything, and all in all. Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together. If we are conscious of our situation and glow with zeal to fill our place as becomes our station and ourselves, we ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on America with the old warning of the church, *Sursum corda!*[1] We ought to elevate our minds to the greatness of that trust to which the order of Providence has called us. By adverting to the dignity of this high calling, our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire, and have made the most extensive, and the only honorable conquests, not by destroying, but by promoting the wealth, the number, the happiness of the human race. Let us get an American revenue as we have got an American empire. English privileges have made it all that it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be.

140 In full confidence of this unalterable truth, I now (*quod felix faustumque sit*[2]) lay the first stone of the temple of peace; and I move you, —

"That the colonies and plantations of Great Britain in North America, consisting of fourteen separate governments, and containing two millions and upwards of free inhabitants, have not had the liberty and privilege of electing and sending any knights and burgesses, or others, to represent them in the high court of parliament."

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[1] *Sursum corda.* Lift up your hearts. Part of the Communion Office of the Church.

[2] *Quod — sit.* This was a form of prayer among the Romans at the commencement of any undertaking. "That it may be happy and prosperous."

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

The Lakeside Series of English Readings

THE RIME

OF THE

ANCIENT MARINER

BY

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

	Reduced from drawings by	Page.
It is an ancient Mariner, *And he stoppeth one of three*	E. H. WEHNERT	21
Merrily did we drop *Below the kirk, below the hill*	BIRKET FOSTER	22
Nodding their heads before her goes *The merry minstrelsy*	E. H. WEHNERT	24
And ice, mast-high, came floating by, *As green as emerald*	E. DUNCAN	25
And every day, for food or play, *Came the mariners' hollo!*	E. H. WEHNERT	27
With my cross-bow *I shot the Albatross*	E. H. WEHNERT	28
"Ah, wretch!" said they, "the bird to slay, *That made the breeze to blow!"*	E. H. WEHNERT	29
As idle as a painted ship, *Upon a painted ocean*	E. DUNCAN	31
Instead of the cross, the Albatross *About my neck was hung*	E. H. WEHNERT	32
When looking westward, I beheld *A something in the sky*	E. H. WEHNERT	34
When that strange shape drove suddenly *Betwixt us and the Sun*	E. DUNCAN	36
I fear thee, ancient Mariner! *I fear thy skinny hand!*	E. H. WEHNERT	39
The moving Moon went up the sky, *And nowhere did abide*	E. DUNCAN	42

A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware . . . . . E. H. WEHNERT . 43

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe . . . . . E. DUNCAN . . . 47

I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air . . . . . E. H. WEHNERT . 49

And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon . . . . . BIRKET FOSTER . 53

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
"Why, this is strange, I trow!" . . . E. H. WEHNERT . 56

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred . . . . . E. DUNCAN . . . 58

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy
Who now doth crazy go . . . . . E. H. WEHNERT . 59

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray . . . . . E. H. WEHNERT . 61

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small. . . . . E. H. WEHNERT 63

INTRODUCTION.

THE life of Coleridge, except his early manhood, yields little but sorrow in the reviewing. He was a dreamy, introspective child, "born old," without any taste for the outdoor sports natural to his years, his only amusement being books and the acting out of scenes either read or imagined. He says of himself: "Alas! I had all the simplicity, all the docility of the child, but none of the child's habits. I never thought as a child — never had the language of a child."

The first eight years of his life he was instructed at home. In his ninth year his first sorrow came, the death of his dearly loved father and instructor. In his eleventh year, already a poet, he entered the "Blue Coat" school, where he remained till he was eighteen. Charles Lamb, his schoolmate and lifelong friend, gives us this picture of him: "How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the speech and the garb of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold in thy deep and sweet intonations the mysteries of Iamblichus or Plotinus (for even in those days thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer

in the Greek, or Pindar, while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed with the accents of the inspired charity boy."

He showed his precocity not so much by his scholarship, nor even by his youthful verses, which were of unusual merit, as by his speculative turn of mind. Coleridge, in his "Biographia Literaria," writes: "At a very premature age, even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics and in theological controversy. Nothing else pleased me. History and particular facts lost all interest in my mind. Poetry (though for a schoolboy of that age I was above par in English versification, and had already produced two or three compositions which, I may venture to say, were somewhat above mediocrity, and which had gained me more credit than the sound good sense of my old master was at all pleased with),—poetry itself, yea, novels and romance, became insipid to me."

He was wiled back to the paths of poetry through the perusal of the sonnets of Bowles (an extraordinary explanation, but his own). Coleridge himself regarded this turn for metaphysical speculation as a mental disease, and did not again indulge it until he was no longer master of himself. To this sad time he alludes in his "Biographia:" "But if, in after-time, I have sought a refuge from bodily pain and mismanaged sensibility in abstruse researches, which exercised the

strength and subtlety of the understanding without awakening the feelings of the heart, there was a long and blessed interval, during which my natural faculties were allowed to expand, and my original tendencies to develop themselves,— my fancy and the love of nature and the sense of beauty in forms and sounds."

Of his university days, we know little. He read much, but his reading was desultory and uneven ; he won a gold medal for a Greek ode on the slave-trade; his room was the rendezvous of the ardent young spirits of the college, fired with the burning topic of the French Revolution, and with zeal for political reform. Lovell, and Seward, and Burnett were of the group ; but Coleridge was the center and heart of it all, fascinating them with his wonderful voice and grace of manner, and copious and eloquent flow of language.

The escapade of his college life is not well understood. One explanation is disappointment in love; another, despondency over debts; his natural disquietude of mind might be offered as a third. Whatever the cause, the circumstances are these : He came up to London with a slender purse, and, after a few days, was compelled, through sheer want, to enlist as a private in the Fifteenth Light Dragoons, under the name of Silas Titus Comberback, a name he considered appropriate because of his poor horsemanship. A

Latin quotation betrayed his probable disguise. The matter was investigated. His discharge was obtained, and after four months' service, he returned to Cambridge.

In June of 1794, he met Southey, whose lifelong friendship was an important influence in the life of both. In the same year Southey introduced him to Lovell, the brother-in-law of his future wife. He also met Cottle, his first publisher.

Coleridge and Southey and Lovell, in a spirit of fun, conceived the idea of writing a joint drama, to be called, "The Fall of Robespierre." Lovell was to write the first act, Southey the second, Coleridge the third and last. Lovell's was discarded as inharmonious with Southey's; Coleridge's characteristically was not done. So Southey rewrote the first, Coleridge finished the third. Curiously enough, it is usually included in Coleridge's poems.

The next project which engaged the young enthusiasts was the founding of a model republic on the banks of the Susquehanna. Twenty-eight members were secured, but they were a penniless lot; and to raise funds, Coleridge and Southey gave each a course of lectures in Bristol. But they brought in but little money, and Southey, the leader, departing to Spain in search of health, Coleridge, whose emotions soon cooled, threw up the matter in disgust and the whole scheme of pantisocracy was finally abandoned.

Previous to this, however, Coleridge had married Sara Fricker, thus fulfilling one of the conditions of membership in the new scheme, a second condition being an agreement to labor two hours a day, the rest of the time to be occupied with literary work. The Misses Fricker had more than done their part. One was already the wife of Lovell, another was engaged to Southey, a third had now become Mrs. Coleridge ; but a fourth had refused Burnett, remarking that if he was in such a hurry for a wife, he might look elsewhere.

Coleridge withdrawing from his lectureship, retired to Clevedon to spend his honeymoon. Here he spent some of the quietest and most contented days of his troubled life ; here he wrote : —

> " Low was our pretty cot ; our tallest rose
> Peeped at the chamber window. We could hear
> At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
> The sea's faint murmur. In the open air,
> Our myrtles blossomed ; and across the porch
> Thick jasmines twined ; the little landscape round
> Was green and woody, and refreshed the eye.
> It was a spot which you might aptly call
> The Valley of Seclusion ! "

Here he revised the poems he had up to this composed ; and in the spring of 1797 they were published by his friend Cottle, who gave him thirty guineas for the copyright. The work was a collection of odes, sonnets, invocations, and a more imposing poem,

"Religious Musings," passages of which are almost Miltonic in grandeur of thought, in verbal construction and sonorousness.

"There is one mind, one omnipresent mind, omnific,
His most holy name is Love,—
Truth of subliming import! — with the which
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
He from his small particular orbit flies
With bliss outstarting! from himself he flies,
Stands in the sun and with no partial gaze,
Views all creation; and he loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good!
This is indeed to dwell with the Most High!
The cherubs and the trembling seraphim
Can press no nearer to the Almighty's throne."

But Coleridge's restless spirit could not long be content; stirring events drew him away from his quiet life.

"Was it right,
While my unnumbered brethren toiled and bled,
That I should dream away the entrusted hours
On rose-leaf beds, pamp'ring the coward heart
With feelings all too delicate for use!"

He chose journalism as the medium of his propaganda of liberty. The paper was called the "Watchman," and in order to avoid the stamp act, was issued every eighth day. It lived but through ten numbers, as might have been expected from the peculiarity of its issue and the heaviness of its contents.

Freed from editorial work, Coleridge retired to Stowey, entering upon the happiest and most satisfactory period of his life. He revised his poetical works, discarding some poems, and adding new ones. He was visited by the Lambs, and by Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. The Wordsworths were so charmed with him that they removed to Nether Stowey for the sole purpose of being near him. The attraction was mutual, and, on Wordsworth's part at least, strong and enduring. The two young men became inseparable companions, taking daily rambles among the Quantock Hills, and discussing their theories in regard to the province and expression of poetic thought. Their close and sympathetic observation of the beauties of nature suggested to them what Coleridge called "the two cardinal points of poetry." That as the accidents of light and shade, of sunlight and moonlight, over a familiar landscape, make the poetry of nature, so in literature a series of poems might be written to correspond : one, the incidents and agents to be, in part at least, supernatural, the interest growing out of the dramatic truth of the emotions which naturally accompany such literature ; the other, the incidents and agents to be chosen from ordinary life — the life of any village or hamlet where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them or notice them when they present themselves. The romantic or supernatural section was assigned to Coleridge, while

Wordsworth was to take the realistic, "to give the charm of novelty to things of every day." "Lyrical Ballads" was the result, the "Ancient Mariner" the notable illustration of Coleridge's theory.

The inception of the poem, its prosaic origin, is interesting, being in such marked contrast to its weirdness. The following is taken from Wordsworth's notes: "Mr. Coleridge, my sister, and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem to be sent to the *New Monthly Magazine*. Accordingly we set off, and proceeded along the Quantock Hills toward Watchet; and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the "Ancient Mariner," founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much of the greater part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention, but certain parts I suggested: for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator (as Coleridge always delighted to call him) the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in "Shelvocke's Voyages," a day or two before, that while doubling Cape Horn they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. 'Suppose,'

said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of those regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and accordingly adopted. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time, at least not a hint of it was given to me ; and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together on that, to me, memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular : —

> " 'And listened like a three years' child :
> The Mariner had his will.'

"These trifling contributions, all but one, which Mr. Coleridge has with unnecessary scrupulosity[1] recorded, slipped out of his mind, as well they might. As we endeavored to proceed conjointly (I speak of the same evening), our respective manners proved so widely different that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog." Farther

[1] "And it is long and lank and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand."

on, Mr. Wordsworth writes: "The 'Ancient Mariner' grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds."

Coleridge's object was "to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith." To his success the sensitive reader will bear admiring testimony; for the real world fades away, and around us flows a sea of mystery and wonder, and the skeleton ship and the dead crew and the rearing water-snakes and the sudden coming of night, all are elements of personal horror and fear.

The versification is irregular, being in the style of the old ballads, and is extraordinarily perfect for so long a poem.

During his two years' stay at Stowey, Coleridge wrote in addition to the "Ancient Mariner," which is considered the best of his poetical works, the first part of "Christabel," which he considered his masterpiece; "Hymn on Chamouni," full of lofty and beautiful thought; "Ode to France," which Shelley pronounced the best ode in the English language; and "Kubla Khan," a fragment written from the recollection of a dream. The first and last are fine examples of the metrical harmony of which Coleridge was a master.

The second part of "Christabel" was not written until 1800. It is inferior to the first part, but contains the lines which Coleridge considered the best he had ever written : —

"Alas ! they had been friends in youth ;
But whispering tongues can poison truth ;
And constancy lives in realms above ;
And life is thorny ; and youth is vain ;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.

* * * * * * *

They parted ne'er to meet again !
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining.
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder ;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat nor frost nor thunder
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been."

These lines have an added interest, as it has been conjectured that Coleridge, when he wrote them, had in mind his quarrel with Southey.

"Lyrical Ballads" was published in the fall of 1798, and immediately Coleridge, accompanied by the two Wordsworths, went to Germany, — Coleridge to "complete his education," as he said, by the study of the German language and philosophy. He remained

abroad a year, coming back full of the old enthusiasm and large literary projects for the future.

Then the tragedy of his life began. He had from boyhood been a sufferer from rheumatism and dyspepsia. To allay the pain recourse was made to opium. The old story is again rewritten. Weak-willed by nature, Coleridge soon became addicted to the regular use of the drug; and in the pathetic lines in his "Ode to Dejection," written less than two years after his return from Germany, he epitomizes what life has been to him, and what it has become, his only resource, what he had called his "mental disease:" —

"There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness;
And fruits and foliage not my own seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth;
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man —
This was my sole resource, my only plan;
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul."

The "shaping spirit of Imagination" was indeed suspended. The creative period of Coleridge's literary life had passed away. His study in Germany bore fruit in a most excellent translation of Wallenstein, the best of his dramas; but from 1802 to 1816, we have but a broken record of occasional lectures, of fitful newspaper work, of the flaring up of the old genius in the old self-delusion of huge plans for the future, of disappearances from the ken of faithful friends.

Persuaded at last that he could not conquer the habit alone, Coleridge in 1816 became an inmate of the home of Mr. Gillman, a London physician, expecting his stay to be temporary, but he remained there till his death in 1834. These eighteen years were by no means fruitless. The judicious care of Mr. Gillman, the regular habits enforced, the wise and loving espionage, restored to a great extent the giant intellect. The creative faculty was dead, indeed dead; but the wonderful author of the "Ancient Mariner" had become the first great critic of Shakespeare, and it may be there is no second.

In his "Biographia Literaria" he expounds with great clearness the doctrine of the "Lake School," of which Wordsworth was the great head. He compiled his "Literary Remains;" he wrote "Aids to Reflection," the best known of his prose works; he elaborated the plan of his *magnum opus*, "The His-

tory of Philosophy," with an immense sweep from Pythagoras to Locke. His "Table Talk," compiled after his death, is full of delightful and stimulating thought; for among the great conversationalists, Coleridge stands without a peer. All this literary work, his later lectures, the friendship and honor, and admiration of that younger circle of literary workers raised him to something of his old position; and he made his exit from what was to him life's troubled stage, with dignity.

Coleridge seems a literary Titan, reckless and prodigal of the rich material of which he was master, fashioning now this, now that, as the fancy seized him, completing nothing, tantalizing us by forcing us to see in the light of what he could do, how little he had done. But he had that worst of all heritages, a weak will, and genius seems always subject to strange vicissitudes.

> "Oh! let him pass: he hates him
> Who would upon the rack of this tough world
> Stretch him out longer."

THE RIME
OF
THE ANCIENT MARINER.
IN SEVEN PARTS.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.

PART I.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

An ancient Mariner meeteth three gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

"The Bridegroom's doors are open wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill.

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye —
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old sea-faring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

"The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

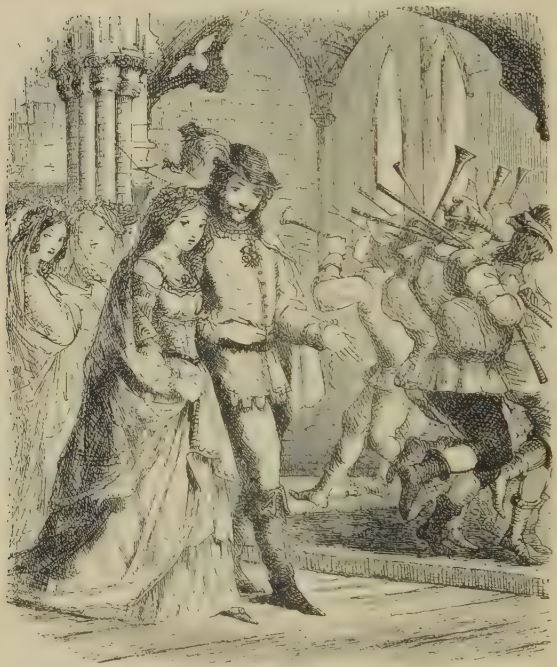
The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather till it reached the Line.

"Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon —"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.



Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The ship drawn by a storm toward the south pole.

"And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

"With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,

And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

"And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen

"And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

"At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hail'd it in God's name.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through.

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned

"And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;

northward through fog and floating ice.

And every day, for food or play,
Came to the Mariner's hollo.

Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—

With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

the pious bird of good omen.

Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross."

"Ah, wretch!" said they, "the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!"

PART II.

"The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

"And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

"And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
'Ah wretch!' said they, 'the bird to slay
That made the breeze to blow!'

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
"T was right,' said they, 'such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.'

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

"The fair breeze blew, and the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'T was sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

"All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

" Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

As idle as a painted ship,
Upon a painted ocean.

" Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

" The very deep did rot. O Christ !
That ever this should be !
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung

" About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

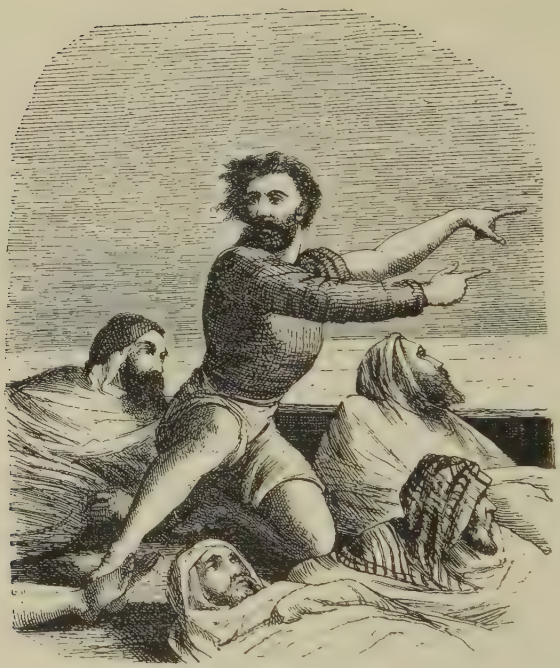
"And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had follow'd us
From the land of mist and snow.

"And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

A spirit hath followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michæl Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

"Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung."

The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner, in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.



When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

PART III.

"THERE passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off

" At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

" A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

" With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood !
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail ! a sail !

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

" With throats unslaked, with black lips baked
Agape they heard me call
Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of joy;

" See ! see ! (I cried) 'she tacks no more !
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel !'

And horror follows. For can it be a *ship* that comes onward without wind or tide?

" The western wave was all a-flame,
The day was well-nigh done !

Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;

When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the sun.

When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

" And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace !)
As if through a dungeon grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

" Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears !
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres ?

" Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate ?
And is that Woman all her crew ?
Is that a Death ? and are there two ?
Is Death that woman's mate ?

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun. The Spectre-Woman and her Death mate, and no other, on board the skeleton-ship.

" Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Like vessel, like crew !

" The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
' The game is done ! I've, I've won ! '
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew: She (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

" The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

No twilight within the courts of the Sun.

At the rising of the Moon,

"We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip —
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after another,

"One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

His shipmates drop down dead.

"Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan,)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

"The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whiz of my cross-bow!"

I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!

PART IV.

"I FEAR thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long and lank and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth the creatures of the calm.

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

And envieth that *they* should live, and so many lie dead.

"I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

"I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

"I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky,
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

"The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

"An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

"The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside —

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

"Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

"Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

"Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide.

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire

"O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,

Their beauty and their happiness.

A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware.

And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

He blesseth them in his heart.

The spell begins to break

"The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V.

"Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven,
That slid into my soul.

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

"The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

"My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

"I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light — almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessèd ghost.

"And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

He heareth sounds, and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the elements.

"The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

"And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud
The Moon was at its edge.

"The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

"The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on;

"They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

"The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze upblew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do:
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

"The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said naught to me."

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:
For when it dawned — they dropped their arms,
And cluster'd round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

But not by the souls of the men, nor by demons of earth or middle air but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

"Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

"Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the skylark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

" And now 't was like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe.

And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

"It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

"Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe;
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

"Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

"The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion —
Backwards and forwards half her length,
With a short uneasy motion.

"Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

" How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;

The Polar Spirit's fellow demons, the invisible inhabitants

I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other,

that penance long and heavy, for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

"'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

"'The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

"The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew;
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'"

PART VI.

FIRST VOICE.

"'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

SECOND VOICE.

"'Still as a slave before his lord.
The Ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast —

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE.

"'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life can endure.

SECOND VOICE.

"'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

"'Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

"I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'T was night, calm night, the Moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

"All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

"The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is finally expiated;

"And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen —

"Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

"But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

"It raised my hair, it fann'd my cheek,
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

"Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

"We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep alway.

And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

"The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

"The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness,
The steady weathercock.

"And the bay was white with silent light
Till, rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

"A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck —
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

and appear in their own forms of light.

"Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

"This seraph-band each waved his hand,
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart —
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

"But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

"The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

"I saw a third — I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He 'll shrieve my soul, he 'll wash away
The Albatross's blood."

PART VII.

"This Hermit good lives in that wood — The Hermit of the wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

"He kneels at morn and noon and eve —
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak stump.

"The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
"Why, this is strange, I trow."

Approacheth the ship with wonder.

"'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said —
'And they answered not our cheer.
The planks looked warped! And see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!

I never saw aught like to them
Unless perchance it were

" ' Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

" ' Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look —
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared '—' Push on, push on ! '
Said the Hermit cheerily

" The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

" Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

" Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

"Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred.

And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound,

" I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go.

The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

"I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

"And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him:

"'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou?'

"Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land,

"Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

"I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

"What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray.

But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

"O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea:
So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

"O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'T is sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company! —

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the Bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small.

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

James Russell Lowell.

The Lakeside Series of English Readings

THE VISION

OF

SIR LAUNFAL

BY

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

With a Biographical Sketch and Notes for use of High Schools and Academies by JOSEPH RUSHTON, L. H. D.

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INTRODUCTION.

No man, certainly no American, in the latter part of the nineteenth century had so various and admirable gifts — Poet, Wit, Moralist, Scholar, Diplomat, Gentleman.— *T. B. Aldrich.*

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, the son of the Reverend Charles Lowell, for many years the minister of the West Church in Boston, was born in Cambridge, Mass., February 22, 1819. Elmwood, the house in which he was born, and where he died, is one of a group of houses, on the road to Watertown, which formerly belonged to Boston merchants and sympathizers with England during the Revolution. Tory Row was the name given to the broad, winding road on which the houses stood, and many of them are still in existence. Elmwood—a delightful residence of the colonial style—was built in 1767 by Thomas Oliver, the royal Lieutenant-Governor. It was surrounded by ancient English elms, adjoining Mount Auburn cemetery and close to the "Old Craigie House," noted for its memories of Washington and Longfellow.

Lowell was a descendant of several generations of strong, intellectual men, his first American ancestor being Percival Lowell, who came to Massachusetts in the early days of the colony. His great-grandfather

was a minister in Newburyport; his grandfather was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1780, who introduced in the Bill of Rights the phrase, "All men are created free and equal," which resulted in liberating all slaves at that time held in Massachusetts. An uncle was a great manufacturer from whom the city of Lowell took its name. Another uncle founded the Lowell Institute in Boston.

The poetic instinct was inherited from his mother, who was of Scotch descent and a native of Portsmouth, N. H.; but everything tended to develop the intellectual faculties,— books, refined society, and all the influences of a college town.

He delighted in the woods and fields, was intensely fond of reading, and averse to the rough sports of the schoolboys.

His early education was acquired from William Wells, who opened a classical school in one of the houses in Tory Row, and who instilled in his mind a knowledge of Latin, which became almost a native speech. Elmwood was about a mile from Harvard College, which he entered in his sixteenth year, and from which he graduated in 1838. He read widely, but not from the college text-books, and his chief interest was in literature. He wrote both poems and essays for the college paper, and was chosen poet for class day; but he was careless in attention to college regulations, and was suspended in the last term of his

final year, and did not return to read his poem. After graduating he studied law for a time, and was admitted to the bar in 1840. In 1843, in connection with Robert Carter, he established a literary magazine, called *The Pioneer*, which numbered among its contributors Hawthorne, Whittier, Poe, and Mrs. Browning, but it only lived for three issues. In this year he married Miss Maria White, of some note as a poet and a prominent abolitionist.

The first period of his literary life was passed in comparative seclusion at Elmwood, with the exception of two journeys to Europe, and may be called the period of his greatest poetical achievement, since it witnessed the issue of "The Vision of Sir Launfal" (1848), which was composed in a space of forty-eight hours, during which he hardly ate or slept; the first series of "The Biglow Papers" (1848), and a "Fable for Critics" (1848). At this time he was a frequent contributor to the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, and was for a while a corresponding editor. His wife died in October, 1853, having borne three children, two of whom died in early childhood, one, Mrs. Burnett, surviving both parents.

In 1855 Longfellow retired from the Harvard professorship of modern languages, and Lowell was chosen "as his most fitting successor." He spent two years in Europe in further study, and was installed in his academic chair in 1857. In this year he mar-

ried Miss Frances Dunlap, of Portland, Me., who had undertaken the education of his daughter.

From this time may date the second period of his literary life, which may be called the period of literary criticism. In addition to his chair at Harvard College, he became editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, with which he was connected for the first nine volumes, and from 1862 until 1873 he was joint editor with Charles Eliot Norton of the *North American Review*. His magazine articles, which comprise the greater part of his critical work, have been published in four volumes: "Fireside Travels," "Among My Books," in two volumes, and "My Study Windows." Among the most remarkable of his writings was the "Second Series of The Biglow Papers," published during the war between the States. Afterward, in a succession of poems, and during 1875 and 1876, he did his most permanent work, representing beyond dispute the highest and most sustained flights of the American muse, the most famous of these poems being his noble commemoration ode.

It was at the close of this period, following an inestimable service to his country, that he was appointed minister to Spain (1877), whence he was transferred (in 1880) to London. He had an accurate knowledge of the Spanish language and literature, and he made every effort to increase his knowledge, and render his services of greater value through more inti-

mate relations with the best men of the time. In England he was a welcome guest, and was in constant demand as a public speaker. He was throughout an American and true to the principles of American institutions. His address on "Democracy" is one of the great statements of human liberty. In 1885 he returned to Elmwood, and shortly after gave another address to his countrymen on "The Place of the Independent in Politics." He died at Elmwood, August 12, 1891, sincerely mourned by all English-speaking peoples. Probably no man has so endeared himself on both sides of the Atlantic, and the unusual honor of a service in his memory at Westminster Abbey shows the deep impression which he made upon the English people.

Probably no American student was so deeply versed in the old French romance, none knew Dante and the Italians more profoundly; German literature was familiar to him, and perhaps even Ticknor in his own domain of Spanish lore was not more a master than Lowell. The whole range of English literature, not only its noble Elizabethan heights, but a delightful realm of picturesque and unfrequented paths were his familiar park of pleasance. Yet he was not a scholarly recluse, a pedant or a bookworm. The student of books was no less so acute and trained an observer of nature, so sensitive to the influences and aspects of out-of-door life that as Charles Briggs with singular insight said that he was meant for a politician, so Darwin with frank admiration said that he was born to be a naturalist.—*George William Curtis.*

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

A TRADITION of great antiquity relates to the Holy Grail, which was supposed to be a cup made from a sapphire, and from which Jesus drank at the Last Supper with his disciples. Many have thought that it was the vessel in which was caught the blood that flowed from his pierced side. It was brought to England by Joseph of Arimathea, and was for many years visited by pilgrims and adored as a holy relic. The keeper of the Grail must be pure in heart. One of Joseph's descendants broke his vow of chastity, and the Grail vanished from mortal sight. It was afterward sought for by the Knights of the Round Table, and was finally discovered by Sir Galahad. Lowell has sought to include a period after King Arthur's reign and other seekers than the Knights of the Round Table, and has enlarged the story by making charity and brotherly love the essentials of success.

Sir Launfal starts not only with enthusiasm but filled with pride and intolerance. After long years of search and suffering he returns to find his home

seized, and he is driven from his own gates into the storm. In this hour of conflict and trial he shares his crust and his draft of water with the leper, who rises, and becomes before him the radiant Christ in whose name he gave the alms, and the very bowl with which he has dipped the water becomes the sapphire chalice. The Holy Grail which he has sought throughout the world he finds at his home-coming, where for the first time he has exercised a perfect charity and a brotherly love.

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL.

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.— According to the mythology of the Romancers, the San Greal, or Holy Grail, was the cup out of which Jesus partook of the Last Supper with his disciples. It was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and remained there, an object of pilgrimage and adoration, for many years in the keeping of his lineal descendants. It was incumbent upon those who had charge of it to be chaste in thought, word, and deed; but one of the keepers having broken this condition, the Holy Grail disappeared. From that time it was a favorite enterprise of the knights of Arthur's court to go in search of it. Sir Galahad was at last successful in finding it, as may be read in the seventeenth book of the "Romance of King Arthur." Tennyson has made Sir Galahad the subject of one of the most exquisite of his poems.

The plot (if I may give that name to anything so slight) of the following poem is my own, and, to serve its purposes, I have enlarged the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a manner as to include, not only other persons than the heroes of the Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the date of King Arthur's reign.

PRELUDE TO PART FIRST.

OVER his keys the musing organist,
  Beginning doubtfully and far away,
First lets his fingers wander as they list.
  And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay:
Then, as the touch of his loved instrument
  Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,
First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent
  Along the wavering vista of his dream.

Not only around our infancy
Doth heaven with all its splendors lie;
Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sinais climb and know it not.

Over our manhood bend the skies;
Against our fallen and traitor lives
The great winds utter prophecies:
With our faint hearts the mountain strives;
Its arms outstretched, the druid wood
Waits with its benedicite;
And to our age's drowsy blood
Still shouts the inspiring sea.

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
We bargain for the graves we lie in;
At the Devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:
'T is heaven alone that is given away,
'T is only God may be had for the asking;
There is no price set on the lavish summer;
And June may be had by the poorest comer.

---

9 See Wordsworth's "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," in *Intimations of Immortality*.

12 Mount Sinai, the mountain upon which Moses talked with God. What does the phrase imply?

17 Druids were venerable men, hence the appropriateness of an aged wood giving its blessing.

27 In the Middle Ages kings had jesters to make sport for the company; and as every one then wore a dress indicating his rank or occupation, the jester wore a cap hung with bells.

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays:
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, grasping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf or a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives,
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God so wills it;

33 While June has no connection with the poem, still, as the musician follows wherever "his fingers list," so the poet is led aside to give a thought to a perfect summer's day.

No matter how barren the past may have been,
'T is enough for us now that the leaves are green :
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell ;
We may shut our eyes, but we can not help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing ;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by ;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack ;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—
And hark ! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing !

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how ;
Everything is happy now,
Everything is upward striving ;
'T is as easy now for the heart to be true
As for the grass to be green or skies to be blue,—
'T is the natural way of living :
Who knows whither the clouds have fled ?
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake ;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache ;
The soul partakes the season's youth,
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.
What wonder if Sir Launfal now
Remembered the keeping of his vow ?

PART FIRST.

I.

"My golden spurs now bring to me,
And bring to me my richest mail,
For to-morrow I go over land and sea
In search of the Holy Grail;
Shall never a bed for me be spread,
Nor shall a pillow be under my head,
Till I begin my vow to keep;
Here on the rushes will I sleep,
And perchance there may come a vision true
Ere day create the world anew."
Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,
Slumber fell like a cloud on him,
And into his soul the vision flew.

II.

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,
In the pool drowsed the cattle up to their knees,
The little birds sang as if it were
The one day of summer in all the year,
And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees:
The castle alone in the landscape lay
Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray:
'T was the proudest hall in the North Countree,
And never its gates might opened be,
Save to lord or lady of high degree;
Summer besieged it on every side,

---

103 In feudal days the floors, which were of stone or earth, were strewn with rushes, as carpets were unknown.

109–118 Note in how few words the poet has sketched a picture of summer.

But the churlish stone her assaults defied;
She could not scale the chilly wall,
Though around it for leagues her pavilions tall
Stretched left and right,
Over the hills and out of sight;
Green and broad was every tent,
And out of each a murmur went
Till the breeze fell off at night.

III.

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,
And through the dark arch a charger sprang,
Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight,
In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright
It seemed the dark castle had gathered all
Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its wall
In his siege of three hundred summers long,
And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,
Had cast them forth: so, young and strong,
And lightsome as a locust-leaf,
Sir Launfal flashed forth in his unscarred mail,
To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

IV.

It was morning on hill and stream and tree,
And morning in the young knight's heart;
Only the castle moodily
Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,
And gloomed by itself apart.
The season brimmed all other things up
Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

122–125 Refers to the woods which covered the adjacent country.

V.

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,
He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the same,
Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
The flesh 'neath his armor did shrink and crawl,
And midway its leap his heart stood still
Like a frozen waterfall;
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn,—
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

VI.

The leper raised not the gold from the dust:
"Better to me the poor man's crust,
Better the blessing of the poor,
Though I turn me empty from his door;
That is no true alms which the hand can hold;
He gives nothing but worthless gold
Who gives from a sense of duty;
But he who gives a slender mite,
And gives to that which is out of sight,
That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty
Which runs through all and doth all unite,—
The hand can not clasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a god goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

PRELUDE TO PART SECOND.

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak
From the snow five thousand summers old;
On open wold and hill-top bleak
It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;
It carried a shiver everywhere
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare;
The little brook heard it and built a roof
'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof;
All night by the white stars' frosty gleams
He groined his arches and matched his beams;
Slender and clear were his crystal spars
As the lashes of light that trim the stars;
He sculptured every summer delight
In his halls and chambers out of sight;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
Bending to counterfeit a breeze;
Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew
But silvery mosses that downward grew;
Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief
With quaint arbesques of ice-fern leaf;
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here
He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops
And hung them thickly with diamond-drops,

---

174 Note the moods indicated by the two preludes. The one of summer, the other of winter. The poet strikes the key which he holds in the following parts.

184 Look at the dictionary for a complete understanding of groined arches.

Which crystalled the beams of moon and sun,
And made a star of every one :
No mortal builder's most rare device
Could match this winter-palace of ice ;
'T was as if every image that mirrored lay
In his depths serene through the summer day,
Each fleeting shadow of earth and sky,
Lest the happy model should be lost,
Had been mimicked in fairy masonry
By the elfin builders of the frost.

Within the hall are song and laughter,
The cheeks of Christmas grow red and jolly,
And sprouting is every corbel and rafter
With lightsome green of ivy and holly ;
Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide
Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide ;
The broad flame-pennons droop and flap
And belly and tug as a flag in the wind ;
Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,
Hunted to death in its galleries blind ;
And swift little troops of silent sparks,
Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,
Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks
Like herds of startled deer.
But the wind without was eager and sharp.
Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,

---

216 Yule-log. A great log of wood, sometimes the root of a tree, brought into the house with great ceremony on Christmas eve, laid in the fireplace, and lighted with the brand of last year's log. While it lasted, there was great drinking, singing, and telling of tales Sometimes it was accompanied by Christmas candles: but in the cottages the only light was from the ruddy blaze of the great wood fire. The Yule-log was to burn all night; if it went out it was considered a sign of ill-luck.

And rattles and wrings
The icy strings,
Singing, in dreary monotone,
A Christmas carol of its own,
Whose burden still, as he might guess,
Was — "Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless!"
The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch
As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,
And he sat in the gateway and saw all night
The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,
Through the window-slits of the castle old,
Build out its piers of ruddy light
Against the drift of the cold.

PART SECOND.

I.

THERE was never a leaf on bush or tree,
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;
The river was dumb and could not speak,
For the frost's swift shuttles its shroud had spun,
A single crow on the tree-top bleak
From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun;
Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,
As if her veins were sapless and old,
And she rose up decrepitly
For a last dim look at earth and sea.

---

235 What significance in Sir Launfal's setting out on his quest in June and returning in December? How can the poem be taken as a type of human life?

II.

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,
For another heir in his earldom sate;
An old, bent man, worn out and frail,
He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;
Little he recked of his earldom's loss,
No more on his surcoat was blazoned the cross,
But deep in his soul the sign he wore,
The badge of the suffering and the poor.

III.

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare
Was idle mail 'gainst the barbed air,
For it was just at the Christmas time;
So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,
And sought for a shelter from cold and snow
In the light and warmth of long-ago;
He sees the snake-like caravan crawl
O'er the edge of the desert, black and small,
Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,
He can count the camels in the sun,
As over the red-hot sands they pass
To where, in its slender necklace of grass,
The little spring laughed and leapt in the shade,
And with its own self like an infant played,
And waved its signal of palms.

IV.

"For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms;"—
The happy camels may reach the spring,

---

255 The Christian knights, while on a sacred quest, wore a large red cross on the white tunic worn over their armor.

But Sir Launfal sees naught save the grewsome thing,
The leper, lank as the rain-blanched bone,
That cowers beside him, a thing as lone
And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas
In the desolate horror of his disease.

v.

And Sir Launfal said,— "I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,—
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,—
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side:
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
Behold, through him, I give to Thee!"

VI.

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he
Remembered in what a haughtier guise
He had flung an alms to leprosie,
When he caged his young life up in gilded mail
And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.
The heart within him was ashes and dust;
He parted in twain his single crust,
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,
And gave the leper to eat and drink:
'T was a mouldy crust of coarse brown bread,
'T was water out of a wooden bowl,—
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed,
And 't was red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

---

279 Lepers were outcasts and not permitted to approach men's dwellings.
281 In medieval times the word "tree" was commonly used to signify the cross.

VII.

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place ;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,
Shining and tall and fair and straight
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate,—
Himself the Gate whereby men can
Enter the temple of God in Man.

VIII.

His words were shed softer than leaves from the pine,
And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,
That mingle their softness and quiet in one
With the shaggy unrest they float down upon ;
And the voice that was calmer than silence said,
"Lo it is I, be not afraid !
In many climes, without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail ;
Behold, it is here,— this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for Me but now ;
This crust is My body broken for thee,
This water His blood that died on the tree ;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need :
Not what we give, but what we share,—
For the gift without the giver is bare ;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."

---

307 See 10th chapter of John, "I am the door;" also "the gate of the temple that is called Beautiful." See Acts iii, 2.

322 The Last Supper of Christ and his disciples, preserved in the communion service of the church.

325 Compare Lowell's treatment of the legend with Tennyson's "The Holy Grail."

IX.

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swound: —
"The Grail in my castle here is found!
Hang my idle armor upon the wall,
Let it be the spider's banquet-hall;
He must be fenced with stronger mail
Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

X.

The castle gate stands open now,
And the wanderer is welcome to the hall
As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;
No longer scowl the turrets tall,
The Summer's long siege at last is o'er;
When the first poor outcast went in at the door,
She entered with him in disguise,
And mastered the fortress by surprise;
There is no spot she loves so well on ground,
She lingers and smiles there the whole year round;
The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land
Has hall and bower at his command;
And there 's no poor man in the North Countree
But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

THE HOLY GRAIL

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

The Lakeside Series of English Readings

THE HOLY GRAIL

FROM

"THE IDYLS OF THE KING"

BY

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Edited with Introduction and Notes for the use of Academies and High Schools by JOSEPH RUSHTON, L. H. D.

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INTRODUCTION.

Tennyson is the most faultless of modern poets in technical execution, but one whose verse is more remarkable for artistic perfection than for dramatic action and inspired fervor. His adroitness surpasses his invention.— *Stedman*.

ALFRED TENNYSON, the son of an Anglican clergyman, was born August 6, 1809, in the village of Somersby, in Lincolnshire, England. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and resided for many years at Aldworth, in Sussex, with a summer residence on the Isle of Wight.

He began to write verse almost as soon as he could write anything, and in his twelfth year wrote an epic of five thousand lines in imitation of Scott. Shortly after, his schoolboy days were concluded, and his education continued under his father's tuition. In 1828 he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where his lack of public-school training became apparent in a painful shyness. Before the year was gone, however, he had found congenial friends, although he never ceased to prefer solitude to the society of strangers. His most important intimate at college was Arthur Henry Hallam, who became his closest friend, and was afterward engaged to his sister Emily.

Tennyson's first recognition came in a prize poem called "Timbuctoo," issued in 1829, which gained the Chancellor's Medal at the Cambridge Commencement. In 1831 his father died, and he left college without taking his degree. Two years after, in 1833, occurred the death of Hallam, which brought the deepest trouble into Tennyson's life, resulting in a spiritual battle with grief and doubt which, nearly twenty years afterward, found its fit expression in the poem, "In Memoriam." In this, Tennyson seeks to bring life and immortality to light.

In 1837, the home at Somersby was broken up, and thereafter, although from time to time he was with his mother, he lived mostly in London lodgings. Here he had the companionship of some of the strongest men of the time,— Mill, Landor, Thackeray, and Carlyle,— and the latter gives this description of him: "A great shock of rough, dusty-dark hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive, yet most delicate; of sallow, brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes, cynically loose, free and easy; smokes infinite tobacco."

In 1850, upon the death of Wordsworth, he was appointed laureate, and thereafter was looked upon as the greatest of living English poets. This year also notes the beginning of an exceptionally happy married life.

In 1855, Oxford conferred on him the degree of D. C. L.

In 1859 was issued his masterpiece, the "Idyls of the King," to which he had given the labor of twenty years. This is a rendering of the Arthurian legends into exquisitely musical verse. In this epic Tennyson has caught the medieval spirit; no other poet has written so beautifully of the much-maligned middle ages. In 1875 Tennyson appeared in a new rôle, that of dramatic poet; but "Queen Mary" was received with respectful and general dissatisfaction, a fate that "Harold" shared in 1877. "Becket," with which a theater was opened in New York by the Irving Company, was only an accidental success, and the ablest critics deem it a reading, not an acting play.

We quote below a striking paragraph from a recent portraiture of his character :—

"Tennyson is essentially a lyric poet, a graceful writer, a singer of many sweet melodies; but the beauty there is rather that of the cold mosaic than of 'the human face divine,' or if it is the beauty of the human countenance, a peaceful or happy soul does not beam through it. In his verse we seem ever to hear a sigh after something that is hopeless, ever a wail for sad days gone by, often most beautifully uttered, yet only a regretful wail with very little of a brightening glimmer of joy to look forward to in life or after it. Sadness is an element of poetry, grief and sorrow go home to the heart of every human being, but not the sadness of despair, not the gloom of endless death. True human sorrow has in it a gleam of hope, but 'Tennyson's Calvary has no Easter.'"

In middle life Tennyson had refused a baronetcy, but in 1884 he yielded to the general desire, and was created a peer, with the title, "Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford," so that thereafter he bore the title of Lord Tennyson. Tennyson was a man of refined tastes, wide culture, profound thought, and studious habits; the beauty and purity of his works are but reflections of the character of the man. His last years were passed in the serene quiet of Aldworth, and there, on October 6, 1892, shortly before the publication of his last volume, he died as calmly as he had lived.

The close of his life was in keeping with the thoughts expressed in his last poem, entitled —

CROSSING THE BAR.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark!

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

IDYLS OF THE KING.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS was Tennyson's masterpiece. It is a group of ten poems, rendering the legends of King Arthur into exquisitely musical verse. Tennyson has caught the medieval spirit, and no other poet has written so beautifully of the Middle Ages. The poems were dedicated to the memory of Prince Albert, and belong wholly to the past.

The chief hero of the Idyls is King Arthur, who, while not contending in the tournaments, and not always the most active, is still the foremost, personage. Little can be said of him as a historical character, and yet he is the ideal hero of Welsh and British legends.[1] He is represented as the son of a mythical king, Uther-Pendragon (dragon-head), and is supposed to have grown up in ignorance of his royal birth, but is taken to London, and there shown a stone from which he draws a sword bearing the inscription, "Whoso pulleth this sword out of this stone is rightwise born King of England." He was crowned King of Britain, and his life was one of constant warfare.

1 See Spenser's dedication of the "Faerie Queene."

His exploits in arms are chronicled by Geoffrey, of Monmouth, about 1138, and are recorded in a multitude of poems. His chief conflicts are with the Saxons following their invasion in 449. He is said to have defeated them in twelve battles, to which Lancelot refers in "Elaine." The location of the contests can not be ascertained, as they have been placed in half the counties of England and in Wales, and even their existence is as uncertain as their hero.

The location of Arthur's palaces is uncertain. Carleon-upon-Usk is said to have been his chief city, but cities claiming his residence are to be found all over the island.

The Round Table was the famous circle of knights gathered around Arthur as their head. Who these knights were may be told in Tennyson's own lines, put into the mouth of Arthur, in "Guinevere": —

> But I was first of all the kings who drew
> The knighthood-errant of this realm, and all
> The realms, together under me, their Head,
> In that fair order of my Table Round,
> A glorious company, the flower of men,
> To serve as model for the mighty world,
> And be the fair beginning of a time.
> I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
> To reverence the King, as if he were
> Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
> To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
> To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
> To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
> To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
> To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
> And worship her by years of noble deeds

Until they won her; for, indeed, I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man
But teach high thought and amiable words
And courtliness and the desire of fame
And love of truth and all that makes a man.

In the "History of King Arthur," by Sir Thomas Malory, we are shown to what grossness of sin these knights had descended, and we must be grateful to Tennyson that in his exquisite poems he has lifted them in part from the depths of their abasement.

Of the knights, the chief in prowess and might of arms was Lancelot, the favorite of King Arthur, and especially beloved by Queen Guinevere. He was supposed to have been born in Brittany; and on his father's death, while yet an infant, he was borne away by his foster-mother Vivien, the lady of the lake, from whom he took his title, *Lancelot du Lac.* He retained his lands in Brittany, which accounts for his offer to *Elaine* of "a realm *beyond the seas.*"

It has grown insensibly, under the hands of one man who has given it the best years of his life, – but somewhat as Wolf conceived the Homeric poems to have grown, chant by chant, until the time came for the whole to be welded together in heroic form. . . . It is the epic of chivalry,—the Christian ideal of chivalry which we have deduced from a barbaric source,—our conception of what knighthood should be, rather than what it really was; but so skilfully wrought of high imaginings, faery spells, fantastic legends, and medieval splendors, that the whole work, suffused with the Tennysonian glamour of golden mist, seems like a chronicle illuminated by saintly hands, and often blazes with light like that which flashed from the holy wizard's book when the covers were un-

clasped. And, indeed, if this be not the greatest narrative poem since 'Paradise Lost,' what other English production are you to name in its place? Never so lofty as the grander portions of Milton's epic, it is more evenly sustained and has no long prosaic passages; while 'Paradise Lost' is justly declared to be a work of superhuman genius impoverished by dreary wastes of theology.—*From Victorian Poets, Stedman.*

For an epitome of the facts concerning a real, historic Arthur, the basis, perhaps, of the mythical Arthur of the Romances, see "Arthur," *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

DATE OF ISSUE OF FIRST EDITION.

1827. Poems by Two Brothers.
1829. Timbuctoo. Printed in "Prolusiones Academicæ."
1830. Poems chiefly Lyrical.
1832. Poems by Alfred Tennyson.
1842. Poems by Alfred Tennyson, in two volumes.
1847. The Princess: A Medley.
1850. In Memoriam.
1852. Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.
1855. Maud, and other Poems.
1859. Idyls of the King.
1864. Enoch Arden, etc.
1865. A Selection from the Works of Alfred Tennyson.
1869. THE HOLY GRAIL, and other Poems.
1870. The Window, or the Song of the Wrens.
1872. Gareth and Lynett, etc.
1875. Queen Mary: A Drama.
1876. Harold: A Drama.
1879. The Lover's Tale.
1884. The Cup and the Falcon.
Becket.
1885. Tiresias, and other Poems.
1886. Locksley Hall Sixty Years After, etc.
1889. Demeter, and other Poems.
1892. The Foresters: Robin Hood and Maid Marian.
The Death of Œnone, Akbar's Dream, and other Poems.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

A TRADITION of great antiquity relates to the Holy Grail, which was supposed to be a cup made from a sapphire, and from which Jesus drank at the Last Supper with his disciples. Many have thought that it was the vessel in which was caught the blood that flowed from his pierced side. It was brought to England by Joseph of Arimathea, and was for many years visited by pilgrims, and adored as a holy relic.

The keeper of the Grail must be pure in heart. One of Joseph's descendants broke his vow of chastity, and the Grail vanished from mortal sight. It was afterward sought for by the Knights of the Round Table, and was finally discovered by Sir Galahad.

It has been claimed that the conception of the legend came from a Welsh monk early in the eighth century through the assertion for the British church of a direct source of its Christianity from Palestine; this was embodied in a book called "De Gradali," which was held in secrecy for more than three hundred years, becoming finally known and read in the latter part of the twelfth century.

This conception of the Grail rapidly assumed an ascendency throughout all Christian lands, making the

Arthurian legends the delight of cultivated minds. To such an extent were the romances in existence that one of the first works of the printing presses in England, France, and Germany was the issuing of poems and romances based on the legend. Thus we find Caxton printed for Sir Thomas Malory, in 1485, "*The History of King Arthur and his Noble Knights*," which formed the basis of Tennyson's "Idyls of the King."

The Holy Grail was first printed in 1869, and in subsequent editions the changes have been few and slight. The story is found in Malory, Books XI to XVII. The poet follows the original closely, but omits much, and sometimes varies from him. The Idyl shows the beginning of the ebb of the tide of Arthur's fortunes; the succeeding poems show its continued decline until the last scene, when he loses all and departs for a time from the world.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd the Pure,
Had past into the silent life of prayer,
Praise, fast, and alms ; and leaving for the cowl
The helmet in an abbey far away
From Camelot, there, and not long after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest,
And honor'd him, and wrought into his heart
A way by love that waken'd love within,
To answer that which came : and as they sat
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke
Above them, ere the summer when he died,
The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale :

'O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hundred years ;
For never have I known the world without,
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale : but thee,

2 Sir Percivale, third son of Pellimore, King of Wales, who saw the Holy Grail after his conflict with Lancelot's brother, and was healed by it.

7 Camelot, King Arthur's palace, whose ruins are still shown in Winchester.

15 The pollen of the yew-tree scattered into smoke by the wind.

21 Beyond the pale — the limits of the monastery.

When first thou camest — such a courtesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice — I knew
For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,
Some true, some light, but every one of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King; and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,
My brother? was it earthly passion crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no such passion mine.
But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out
Among us in the jousts, while women watch
Who wins, who falls; and waste the spiritual strength
Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy Grail! — I trust
We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here too much
We moulder — as to things without I mean —
Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours,
Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so low
We heard not half of what he said. What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' answer'd Percivale.
'The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
This, from the blessed land of Aromat —

---

37 *Replied.*

48 Aromat — the town of Arimathea in Palestine.

After the day of darkness, when the dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah — the good saint,
Arimathean Joseph, journeying brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.
And there a while it abode; and if a man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to heaven and disappear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build;
And there he built with wattles from the marsh
A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours, but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
But who first saw the holy thing to-day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
With such a fervent flame of human love,
Which, being rudely blunted, glanced and shot

49 Refers to the crucifixion (Matthew xxvii, 52).

52 A species of hawthorn which blossoms at Christmas, and according to tradition sprang from the staff used by Joseph of Arimathea.

60 See Introduction.

61 Arviragus — King of the Britains during the reign of Vespasian.

Only to holy things; to prayer and praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
And the strange sound of an adulterous race,
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
A man well-nigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or six,
And each of these a hundred winters old,
From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made
His Table Round, and all men's hearts became
Clean for a season, surely he had thought
That now the Holy Grail would come again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,
And heal the world of all their wickedness!
"O Father!" ask'd the maiden, "might it come
To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay," said he,
"I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow."
And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought
She might have risen and floated when I saw her.

'For on a day she sent to speak with me.
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness!
And "O my brother Percivale," she said,

"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail:
For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's use
To hunt by moonlight;' and the slender sound
As from a distance beyond distance grew
Coming upon me — O never harp nor horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
Was like that music as it came; and then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
With rosy colors leaping on the wall;
And then the music faded, and the Grail
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls
The rosy quiverings died into the night
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother, fast thou, too, and pray
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
That so perchance the vision may be seen
By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd
Always, and many among us many a week
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

'And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armor, Galahad.

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135 Son of Lancelot and Elaine.

"God make thee good as thou art beautiful!"
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight; and none
In so young youth was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

'Sister or brother none had he; but some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said
Begotten by enchantment — chatterers they,
Like birds of passage piping up and down,
That gape for flies — we know not whence they come;
For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,
Saying: "My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city:" and as she spake,
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief.

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138 According to the romances he was made a knight at the age of fifteen.
162 See lines 483 and 526.

'Then came a year of miracle: O brother,
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin call'd it "the Siege Perilous,"
Perilous for good and ill; "for there," he said,
"No man should sit but he should lose himself:"
And once by misadvertence Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

'Then on a summer night it came to pass,
While the great banquet lay along the hall,
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat, we heard
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than day;
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and it past.

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168 Fashioned by Merlin.—Merlin also made at Carduel the Round Table for one hundred and fifty knights which came into the possession of King Arthur on his marriage to Guinevere. He is said also to have brought from Ireland the stones of Stonehenge on Salisbury plain, where they commemorate Aurelius Ambrosius' victory over Vortigern.

174 See note to lines 180 to 200.

But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And staring each at other like dumb men
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

'I sware a vow before them all, that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking him,
'What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale, 'the King,
Was not in hall: for early that same day,
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit bold,
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
Crying on help: for all her shining hair
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky arm
Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
In tempest; so the King arose and went

180-200 Sir Galahad was the only knight who could sit in the "Siege Perilous," a seat at the Round Table reserved for the knight destined to achieve the quest of the Holy Grail; and no other person could sit in it without peril to his life. His great achievement was that of the Holy Grail. It is quite certain that the Arthurian legends mean that Sir Galahad saw with his bodily eyes and touched with his hands "the incarnate Saviour" reproduced by the consecration of the elements of bread and wine. Others see it by the eye of faith only, but Sir Galahad saw it bodily with his eyes.

209 Cried out for help.

To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees
That made such honey in his realm. Howbeit
Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then began
To darken under Camelot; whence the King
Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there! the roofs
Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-smoke!
Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt!"
For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,
As having there so oft with all his knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

'O brother, had you known our mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,
And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.
And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, "We have still a king."

'And, brother, had you known our hall within,
Broader and higher than any in all the lands!
Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,
And all the light that falls upon the board
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.
Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,
Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
And also one to the west, and counter to it,
And blank: and who shall blazon it? when and how? —
O, there, perchance, when all our wars are done,
The brand Excalibur will be cast away!

'So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw
The golden dragon sparkling over all;
And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms
Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke and sear'd,
Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,
Full of the vision, prest: and then the King

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250 See Introduction.

253 The brand Excalibur.— "After his fight with Pellinore, King Arthur said to Merlin he had no sword, and Merlin took him to a lake, and Arthur saw an arm 'clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in the hand.' Presently the Lady of the Lake appeared, and Arthur begged that he might have the sword, and the Lady told him to go and fetch it. When he came to it, he took it and the arm went under the water again. When about to die, King Arthur sent an attendant to cast the sword back again into the lake, and again the hand 'clothed in white samite' appeared, caught it, and disappeared."— *Hist. of Prince Arthur.*

Spake to me, being nearest, "Percivale,"—
Because the hall was all in tumult — some
Vowing, and some protesting, — "what is this?"

'O brother, when I told him what had chanced,
My sister's vision and the rest, his face
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,
When some brave deed seem'd to be done in vain,
Darken; and "Woe is me, my knights," he cried,
"Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow."
Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself been here,
My King, thou wouldst have sworn." "Yea, yea,"
said he,
"Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?"

'"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,
But since I did not see the holy thing,
I sware a vow to follow it till I saw."

'Then when he ask'd us, knight by knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were as one:
"Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows."

'"Lo, now," said Arthur, "have ye seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,
"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail, and heard a cry —
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.'"

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287 See Matthew xi, 7.

' "Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the King, "for such
As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign —
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she —
A sign to maim this Order which I have made.
But ye that follow but the leader's bell,"—
Brother, the King was hard upon his knights, —
300 "Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,
And one hath sung, and all the dumb will sing.
Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne
Five knights at once, and every younger knight,
Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
Till overborne by one, he learns — and ye,
What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor Percivales" —
For thus it pleased the King to range me close
After Sir Galahad; —"nay," said he, "but men
With strength and will to right the wrong'd, of power
310 To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,
Knights that in twelve great battles splash'd and dyed
The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood —
But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.
Go, since your vows are sacred, being made:
Yet — for ye know the cries of all my realm
Pass thro' this hall — how often, O my knights,
Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come and go
Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires
320 Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most,
Return no more: ye think I show myself
Too dark a prophet: come now, let us meet

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300 *Taliessin*. The name means "the radiant brow." He was the prince of British singers, and flourished in the seventh century (Littledale).

The morrow morn once more in one full field
Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,
Before ye leave him for this quest, may count
The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,
Rejoicing in that Order which he made."

'So when the sun broke next from underground,
All the great Table of our Arthur closed
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,
So many lances broken — never yet
Had Camelot seen the like since Arthur came;
And I myself and Galahad, for a strength

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330 The display of chivalry was not confined to the battle-field, but found a frequent occasion in the tournament or joust — the highest species of amusement of this period. It consisted of fierce personal contests, held in an enclosed space called the *lists*, around which, in galleries, sat the nobles and ladies to witness the sport, the outside being thronged with eager spectators from the lower orders At the sound of the trumpet, the combatants, covered with steel and known only by their emblazoned shields, dashed at full gallop from the opposite ends of the lists; and meeting in the center with a terrific shock, one or the other was generally unhorsed, their lances often being shivered to pieces. The vanquished was thrown bruised and bleeding to the ground, and the victor was rewarded by receiving his horse and armor, and sometimes by the privilege of naming some lady, who, with the title of Queen of Love, presided over the remainder of the tournament. In other cases, he received a scarf, ribbon, or other favor from the lady in whose honor the tournament was held.

These combats were not only used for sport, but were resorted to in order to discover the guilty, it being the prevailing belief that Providence would interpose, in all such cases, for the protection of the innocent. In this conviction, those who were charged with crime were challenged by their accusers, and were compelled to abide the issue of a personal combat in the lists.

The tournament differed from the joust principally in the greater number of the combatants. Both were held in the open air, the tournament lasting several days. Outside the lists, were pitched the tents of the knights, decorated with their coats of arms; while immediately surrounding the lists, seats were arranged for spectators, who attended in large numbers. Special canopies of silk and other rich stuffs were erected for the ladies, who thronged to the spectacle arrayed in their costliest dresses. At the close of the performance the victorious knights were publicly crowned by the ladies of their choice. — *Anderson, Hist. of Eng.*

Was in us from the vision, overthrew
So many knights that all the people cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,
Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale!"

'But when the next day brake from underground —
O brother had you known our Camelot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so old
The King himself had fears that it would fall,
So strange, and rich, and dim; for where the roofs
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of those
Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and where the long
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers
Fell as we past; and men and boys astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
At all the corners, named us each by name,
Calling "God speed!" but in the ways below
The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor
Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak
For grief, and all in middle street the Queen,
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd aloud,
"This madness has come on us for our sins."
So to the Gate of the Three Queens we came,
Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically,
And thence departed every one his way.

'And I was lifted up in heart, and thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,

360 Heraldic Devices.

How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,
So many and famous names; and never yet
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I knew
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my mind.
Then every evil word I had spoken once,
And every evil thought I had thought of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,
Awoke and cried, "This quest is not for thee.'
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death;
And I, too, cried, "This quest is not for thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook,
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave,
And took both ear and eye; and o'er the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest here,"
I said, "I am not worthy of the quest;"
But even while I drank the brook, and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And thirsting in a land of sand and thorns.

'And then behold a woman at a door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,
"Rest here;" but when I touch'd her, lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
Became no better than a broken shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in the field
The plowman left his plowing and fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail
The milkmaid left her milking, and fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me moved
In golden armor with a crown of gold
About a casque all jewels, and his horse
In golden armor jewelled everywhere;
And on the splendor came, flashing me blind,
And seem'd to me the lord of all the world,
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he came,
And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

'And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
And on the top a city wall'd: the spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and these
Cried to me climbing, "Welcome, Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!"
And glad was I and clomb, but found at top
No man, nor any voice. And thence I past
Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but there I found
Only one man of an exceeding age.
"Where is that goodly company," said I,
"That so cried out upon me?" and he had
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd,
"Whence and what art thou?" and even as he spoke
Fell into dust and disappear'd, and I
Was left alone once more and cried in grief,
"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into dust!"

'And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,
Low as the hill was high, and where the vale
Was lowest found a chapel, and thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he said:

'"O son, thou hast not true humility,
The highest virtue, mother of them all;
For when the Lord of all things made Himself
Naked of glory for his mortal change,
'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all is thine,
And all her form shone forth with sudden light
So that the angels were amazed, and she

Follow'd Him down, and like a flying star
Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east;
But her thou hast not known: for what is this
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy sins?
Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself
As Galahad." When the hermit made an end,
In silver armor suddenly Galahad shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance and enter'd, and we knelt in prayer.
And there the hermit slaked my burning thirst,
And at the sacring of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone; but he,
"Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine:
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread and went;
And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,
This holy thing, fail'd from my side, nor come
Cover'd, but moving with me night and day,
Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
Blood-red. And in the strength of this I rode,
Shattering all evil customs everywhere,
And past thro' Pagan realms, and made them mine,
And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore them down.
And broke thro' all, and in the strength of this
Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,
And hence I go; and one will crown me king

463 The bread and wine of the Eucharist.

Far in the spiritual city ; and come thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

'While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
One with him, to believe as he believed.
Then, when the day began to wane, we went.

'There rose a hill that none but man could climb,
Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-courses —
Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it, storm
Round us and death ; for every moment glanced
His silver arms and gloom'd : so quick and thick
The lightnings here and there to left and right
Struck, till the dry old trunks about us, dead,
Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,
Sprang into fire : and at the base we found
On either hand, as far as eye could see,
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,
Part black, part whiten'd with the bones of men,
Not to be crost, save that some ancient king
Had built a way, where, link'd with many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.
And Galahad fled along them bridge by bridge,
And every bridge as quickly as he crost
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I yearn'd
To follow ; and thrice above him all the heavens
Open'd and blazed with thunder such as seem'd
Shoutings of all the sons of God : and first
At once I saw him far on the great Sea,
In silver-shining armor starry-clear ;

509 See Job xxxviii, 7.

And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud.
And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,
If boat it were — I saw not whence it came.
And when the heavens open'd and blazed again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —
And had he set the sail, or had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings?
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn.
Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl —
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints —
Strike from the sea; and from the star there shot
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall see.
Then fell the floods of heaven drowning the deep,
And how my feet recrost the deathful ridge
No memory in me lives; but that I touch'd
The chapel-doors at dawn I know; and thence
Taking my war-horse from the holy man,
Glad that no phantom vext me more, return'd
To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius,—'for in sooth
These ancient books — and they would win thee — teem,

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526 See Revelation xxi, 10 and following. See lines 162 and 483.

Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
With miracles and marvels like to these,
Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,
Who read but on my breviary with ease,
Till my head swims, and then go forth and pass
Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,
And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest
To these old walls — and mingle with our folk;
And knowing every honest face of theirs
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
And every homely secret in their hearts,
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
And ills and aches, and teethings, lyings-in,
And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
That have no meaning half a league away;
Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,
Chafferings and chatterings at the market-cross,
Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,
Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs —
O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,
Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,
No man, no woman?'

Then Sir Percivale:

'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,
And women were as phantoms. O, my brother,
Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee
How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?
For after I had lain so many nights,
A bed-mate of the snail and eft and snake,
In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan

558 *The market-cross*, a common feature of the market-place in old English towns and still existing in some localities.

And meager, and the vision had not come;
And then I chanced upon a goodly town
With one great dwelling in the middle of it.
Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd
By maidens each as fair as any flower;
But when they led me into hall, behold,
The princess of that castle was the one,
Brother, and that one only, who had ever
Made my heart leap; for when I moved of old
A slender page about her father's hall,
And she a slender maiden, all my heart
Went after her with longing, yet we twain
Had never kiss'd a kiss or vow'd a vow.
And now I came upon her once again,
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
And all his land and wealth and state were hers.
And while I tarried, every day she set
A banquet richer than the day before
By me, for all her longing and her will
Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn,
I walking to and fro beside a stream
That flash'd across her orchard underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,
And calling me the greatest of all knights,
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first time,
And gave herself, and all her wealth to me.
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
And the quest faded in my heart. Anon,
The heads of all her people drew to me,
With supplication both of knees and tongue:
"We have heard of thee: thou art our greatest
knight,

Our Lady says it, and we well believe:
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."
O me, my brother! but one night my vow
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own self,
And even the holy quest, and all but her;
Then after I was join'd with Galahad
Cared not for her nor anything upon earth.'

Then said the monk: 'Poor men, when yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for me
Ever so little; yea, and blest be Heaven
That brought thee here to this poor house of ours
Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm
My cold heart with a friend: but O the pity
To find thine own first love once more — to hold,
Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms,
Or all but hold, and then — cast her aside,
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed!
For we that want the warmth of double life,
We that are plagued with dreams of something sweet
Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich, —
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-wise,
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,
But live like an old badger in his earth,
With earth about him everywhere, despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,
None of your knights?'

612 See note page 21, "Vision of Sir Launfal."
628 In his hole.

'Yea, so,' said Percivale:
'One night my pathway swerving east, I saw
The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors
All in the middle of the rising moon,
And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him, and he me,
And each made joy of either; then he ask'd:
"Where is he? hast thou seen him — Lancelot? —
Once,"
Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across me — mad,
And maddening what he rode; and when I cried,
'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest
So holy?' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me not!
I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace.
For now there is a lion in the way!'
So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,
Because his former madness, once the talk
And scandal of our table, had return'd;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him
That ill to him is ill to them, to Bors
Beyond the rest: he well had been content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,
The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,
Being so clouded with his grief and love,
Small heart was his after the holy quest,
If God would send the vision, well; if not,
The quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

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646 *His former madness.* How Lancelot became mad because Guinevere was angry with him when she believed him to be in love with Elaine, is told by Malory (xi, 9); and also, how, after two years, he was healed by the Holy Grail (xii, 4).

'And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors
Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,
And found a people there among their crags,
Our race and blood, a remnant that were left
Paynim amid their circles, and the stones
They pitch up straight to heaven; and their wise men
Were strong in that old magic which can trace
The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at him
And this high quest as at a simple thing,
Told him he follow'd — almost Arthur's words —
A mocking fire: "what other fire than he
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd?"
And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd,
Hearing he had a difference with their priests,
Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell
Of great piled stones; and lying bounden there
In darkness thro' innumerable hours
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
Over him till by miracle — what else? —
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell.
Such as no wind could move; and thro' the gap
Glimmer'd the streaming scud: then came a night
Still as the day was loud, and thro' the gap
The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round —
For, brother, so one night, because they roll
Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars.
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King —

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661 Probably pagans living in the Druidical circles like that at Stonehenge. See note to line 168

681 The Seven Stars of the Great Bear, or "the Dipper" as it is commonly called.

And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,
In on him shone: "And then to me, to me,"
Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes of mine,
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself —
Across the seven clear stars — O grace to me! —
In color like the fingers of a hand
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd
A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards, a maid,
Who kept our holy faith among her kin
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

To whom the monk: 'And I remember now
That pelican on the casque: Sir Bors it was
Who spake so low and sadly at our board;
And mighty reverent at our grace was he:
A square-set man and honest; and his eyes,
An outdoor sign of all the warmth within,
Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath a cloud,
But heaven had meant it for a sunny one:
Ay, ah, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye reach'd
The city, found ye all your knights return'd,
Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,
Tell me, and what said each, and what the King?"

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And that can I
Brother, and truly; since the living words
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King
Pass not from door to door and out again,
But sit within the house. O, when we reach'd
The city, our horses stumbling as they trode

706 *Sooth*, truth

On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cockatrices,
And shatter'd talbots, which had left the stones
Raw that they fell from, brought us to the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the dais-throne,
And those that had gone out upon the quest,
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,
And those that had not, stood before the King,
Who, when he saw me, rose and bade me hail,
Saying: "A welfare in thine eyes reproves
Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee
On hill or plain, at sea or flooding ford.
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late
Among the strange devices of our kings,
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,
And from the statue of Merlin molded for us
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but now — the quest,
This vision — hast thou seen the Holy Cup,
That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast heard,
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve
To pass away into the quiet life,
He answer'd not, but, sharply turning, ask'd
Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this quest for thee?"

'"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for such as I.
Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
Who made me sure the quest was not for me;

715 A basilisk was a fabulous creature formerly supposed to kill by a look
735 See lines 4 and 895.

For I was much a-wearied of the quest,
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then this gale
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
And blew my merry maidens all about
With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant to me."

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to whom at first
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering, push'd
Athwart the throne to Lancelot, caught his hand,
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him, stood,
Until the King espied him, saying to him,
"Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail:" and Bors,
"Ask me not, for I may not speak of it:
I saw it;" and the tears were in his eyes.

'Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the storm;
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the last;
"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the King, 'my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this quest avail'd for thee?"

'"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot, with a groan;
"O King!"—and when he paused methought I spied

761 See John xi, 1-11.

A dying fire of madness in his eyes —
"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,
Happier are those that welter in their sin,
Swine in the mud, that can not see for slime,
Slime of the ditch; but in me lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower
And poisonous grew together, each as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy knights
Sware, I sware with them only in the hope
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail
They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I spake
To one most holy saint, who wept and said
That, save they could be pluck'd asunder, all
My quest were but in vain; to whom I vow'd
That I would work according as he will'd.
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and strove
To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
My madness came upon me as of old,
And whipt me into waste fields far away.
There was I beaten down by little men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword
And shadow of my spear had been enow
To scare them from me once; and then I came
All in my folly to the naked shore,
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew;
But such a blast, my King, began to blow,
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand

Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a boat,
Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain.
And in my madness to myself I said,
'I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my sin.'
I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
And with me drove the moon and all the stars;
And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
And steps that met the breaker! There was none
Stood near it but a lion on each side
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs.
There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring manes
Those two great beasts rose upright like a man,
Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between,
And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,
'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the beasts
Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with violence
The sword was dash'd from out my hand, and fell.

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810 *The enchanted towers of Carbonek.* The name is from Malory (xvii, 16). After Lancelot had lain "four and twenty days, and also many nights, . . . still as a dead man," he recovered from the long swoon. "Then they asked him how it stood with him. Forsooth, said he, I am whole of body, thanked be our Lord; therefore, sirs, for God's love, tell me where that I am? Then said they all that he was in the castle of Carbonek."

And up into the sounding hall I past;
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw.
No bench nor table, painting on the wall
Or shield of knight, only the rounded moon
Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
But always in the quiet house I heard,
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower
To the eastward. Up I climb'd a thousand steps
With pain; as in a dream I seem'd to climb
For ever: at the last I reach'd a door,
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
'Glory and joy and honor to our Lord
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail!'
Then in my madness I essay'd the door;
It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
As from a seven-times-heated furnace, I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away —
O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes!
And but for all my madness and my sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
That which I saw; but what I saw was veil'd
And cover'd, and this quest was not for me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot left
The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain — nay,
Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words,—

828 A window looking out upon the ocean.

A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
Now bolden'd by the silence of his King,—
Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege," he said,
"Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?
When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?
But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,
Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,
Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least.
But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,
I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless King,
"Gawain, and blinder unto holy things,
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
Being too blind to have desire to see.
But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Percivale,
For these have seen according to their sight.
For every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music thro' them, could but speak
His music by the framework and the chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

"Nay — but thou errest, Lancelot: never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
With such a closeness but apart there grew,

862 Darwin says, "Cats which are entirely white and have blue eyes are generally deaf."

Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

'"And spake I not too truly, O my knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I said
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
That most of them would follow wandering fires,
Lost in the quagmire? — lost to me and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order — scarce return'd a tithe —
And out of those to whom the vision came
My greatest hardly will believe he saw.
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And, leaving human wrongs to right themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath had the vision face to face,
And now his chair desires him here in vain,
However they may crown him otherwhere.

'"And some among you held that if the King
Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow:
Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow,
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done, but, being done,
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come as they will; and many a time they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,

899 See lines 275 to 279.

This air that smites his forehead is not air
But vision — yea, his very hand and foot —
In moments when he feels he can not die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again : ye have seen what ye have seen."

So spake the King : I knew not all he meant.'

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